
PC
ZONE
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WIN! A PENTIUM
Hfl20.95 January 1996 ISSUE 34
U-27 FLANKER
n it be better than EF2000?
ENE WARS
clusive! Bullfrog's biological battle.
HE DIG
e greatest LucasArts adventure ever?
IPEOUT
e PlayStation classic hits the PC.
YNDICATE WARS
ally amoral, but is it better than sex?
First Ever Review!
Rebel Assault 2
LucasArts finally unveil the sequel to the biggest CD game ever!
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PPA

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Rebel Assault 2

***Rebel Assault 2* (page 52) is the sequel to the biggest PC CD-ROM title of all time and it looks absolutely fabulous. Contrary to popular belief, *PC Zone* is not completely obsessed by *Star Wars*.**

REVIEWS

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New and improved with 'real' live action bits, completely gorgeous looking graphics and a story that would make a corking movie. *Rebel 2* is here and we've got the exclusive first review!

Grand Prix Manager 58
Bit of a change this one. What do you get if you cross *Championship Manager 2* with motor racing? One of the most imaginative management simulations around, that's what.

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The game that was 65 million years in the making. If it had taken any longer to finish they'd have had to call it *Jurassic Stonekeep*. Or something.

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Developed by Russian pilots, *Su27* is all about one of the scariest aircraft ever built. But does Mindscape's new flight sim have what it takes to knock *EF2000* off the top?

Arcade Classics 68
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Sensible World of Soccer 73
We waited a bit of a long time for this one. It's got some management bits and some nice rendered cut-scene bits and a bit of commentary, but unfortunately it's still not a patch on...

Actua Soccer 74
Quite possibly the greatest soccer game ever produced. Forget *FIFA 96*, forget *Sensi* – this has the very best of everything. Excellent gameplay and a fantastic 3D polygonised pitch arrangement.

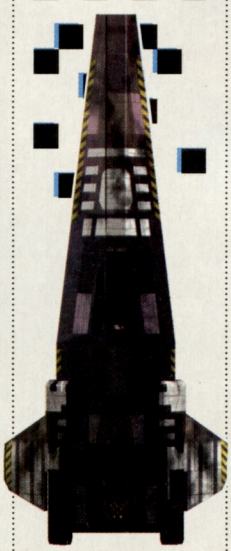
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Is it a *Doom* clone or not? Hmm... maybe. But it does have Dani Behr providing the voice for the lead character.

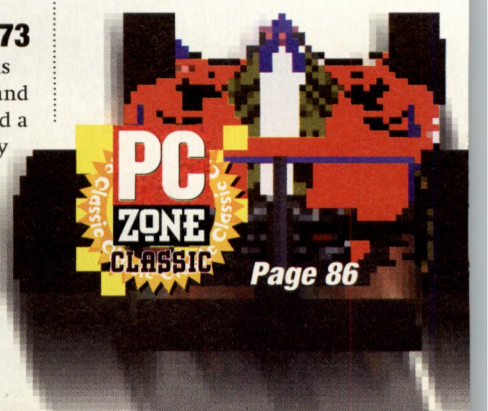
IndyCar 2 86
Beating *Formula One Grand Prix 2* to the shops by a good couple of months, Virgin's polygontastic racing game screeches in with absolutely glorious SVGA graphics.

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The Dig 92
LucasArts is on a roll this month... not only is *Rebel Assault 2* finally finished, but we've also had the chance to check out *The Dig*, one of the most eagerly awaited point-and-clickers ever.



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WIN! A PENTIUM

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BLUEPRINTS

Zone Raiders 30
It would appear that 3D racing games are 'in' at the moment. This little beauty is a cross between *Wipeout* and *Hi-Octane*, and it looks rather groovy.

Ram Racer 34
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Resurrection: Cyberia 2 42
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One of the most revered games in history is just about to spawn a sequel. However, can Bullfrog pull it off and produce a game that is actually better than *Syndicate*?



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FEATURES

Doom Deathmatch Championships 111
Macca and the UK champion went to Seattle to beat the shit out of the known world at *Doom*... and this is the report they came back with. Find out if the UberFragMeister™ is still the best.

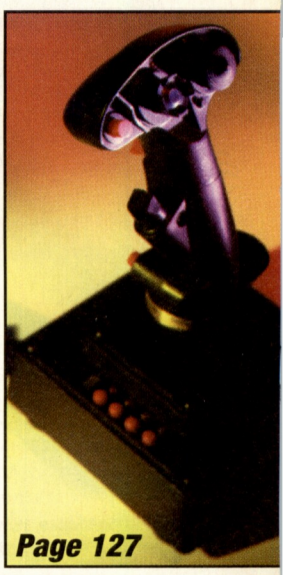
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Pinball World 99
Guess who this one's by? Yep, 21st Century Entertainment brings us yet another pinball game, but this one has some new 'different' bits.

Tilt 101
PC Zone goes pinball-tastic this month as we take a peak at Virgin's offering. Loads of tables, super hi-res graphics and a no-nonsense name. Be fair, what more could you want?

Pro Pinball: The Web 102
Yet more pinball! Bloody hell, anyone would have thought we put these three reviews together for a reason. Yet again we have super hi-res graphics, but this time we get only one table, and a soundtrack by Stiff Little Fingers.

Entomorph 106
Back in the good ol' days *PC Zone* used to review games that looked similar to this every month. Though top-down RPGs have gone out of fashion somewhat in recent years, Mindscape and SSI are hoping to revive things a bit.

Fighter Duel 108
Some planes, a huge slab of sky and er, not a lot else. Philips Media produces a flight sim that doesn't seem to have any point to it. Doh!



C:\>Cover Disk

HD DISK



To load this month's HD demo, go into Windows, run File Manager (or Windows Explorer for Windows 95) and double-click on Setup.exe on Disk 1. Then follow the instructions on screen and off you go!

Battle Ground Ardennes (Empire)

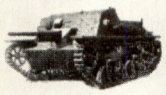
This is an absolutely brill strategy game for all wargamers. Set in the Second World War, you can take the side of either the Allies or the Axis and play through one of the most decisive battles of the war.

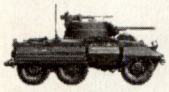
At the start there is an option screen to decide who plays who (you've got the option of playing head-to-head with another player). The FOW option (Fog of War) gives limited information about the opposition, the other options allow you to see the whole map.

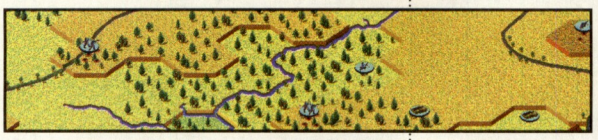
The game runs in Windows and has a comprehensive help file to explain the intricacies of the game. To view the help file, click on the 'Help' toolbar at the top and select the category you need information on.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: 4Mb











No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclosing your HD as proof of purchase and a cheque for a whole £1, and send it to:

Miles Tudor, CD Exchange (PCZ33), Electronic Publishing Unit, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London. W1P 7HJ

***Your Details** (Please print clearly):*

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

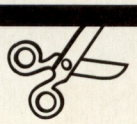
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CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles between 10.30am and 5.30pm on: 0171-917 7693



CD-ROM DISC



To get to the vast array of demos, videos and other stuff just place your CD in the relevant drive and type <PCZONE> at the DOS prompt. This will run the *PC Zone* menu where you can select which demo you wish to run using your mouse. It's as simple as that!

PLAYABLE DEMOS

NHL '96 (EA Sports)

Hockey is an American sport that is becoming increasingly popular over here. This fully playable demo lets you play a friendly (in so much as friendly in ice hockey terms means having your teeth knocked out) between the Red Wings and the Devils. You can either play against the computer or play head-to-head with another player. This demo is exclusive to *PC Zone*, which means that readers of other, less god-like game mags won't get a sniff of it. Fab!

Controls: Mouse, joystick

Destruction Derby (Sony Interactive)

The aim of the game is quite simple - knock the crap out of every other driver in the arena. This fully playable demo is set in an arena with loads of other cars and you've got 60 seconds to run up as many points as you can.

Controls:

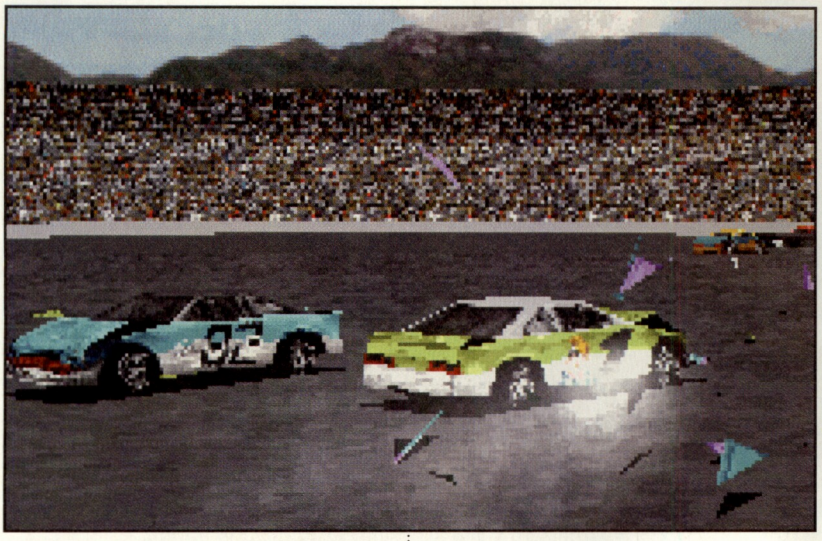
A	Accelerate
Z	Brake/reverse
Left arrow	Turn left
Right arrow	Turn right
F1	View up
F2	View down

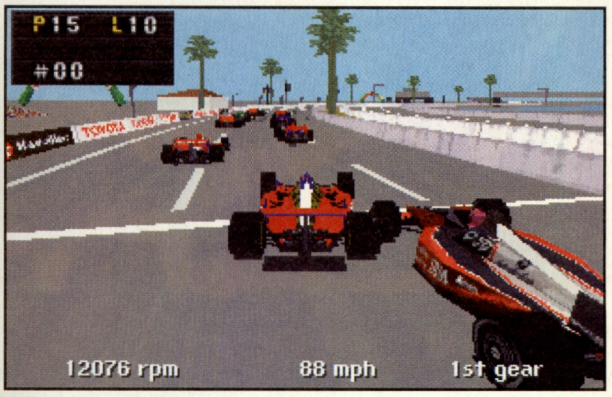
Pro Pinball: The Web (Empire)

A rather splendid looking pinball game which looks just like the real thing. The menu system will run the demo at the low setting with limited sound (for 4Mb users); however, the finished version will almost definitely need 8Mb, so check before purchasing. If your PC has 8Mb of RAM or more you should go into the Propin\Theweb directory on drive C and view the readme.txt file for more information.

Specifications: 4Mb

Welcome to yet another fun-filled demo-fest CD brought to you courtesy of *PC Zone*. This month we've got *Destruction Derby*, Sony's amazing new arcade driving game. We've also got a totally cool, totally exclusive demo of *NHL Hockey '96*, a playable demo of Empire's excellent new pinball game *The Web*, and tons of other fun-tastic stuff besides. Enjoy!





(Left) *Destruction Derby* from Sony Interactive is one of the best looking racing games on the PC.

(Above) *IndyCar 2* from Virgin is one of the most eagerly awaited titles of the year.

Battle Ground Ardennes (Empire)

This is a playable demo of Empires' rather impressive wargame. Please refer to the HD section for instructions on running it.

Specifications: 4Mb

Shell Shock (Core Design)

Do tanks, guns, mayhem and death sound like a good combination? Well, it is. Manoeuvre your tank around the serene landscape, meet interesting people and kill them. Simply arcade action at its best.

Controls:

Spacebar	Fire selected weapon
S	Select weapon
Tab	Toggle map
<	Rotate left
>	Rotate right
Q	Accelerate
A	Brake/reverse

Hi-Octane Revs Pack (Bullfrog)

This is an add-on for those who already own Bullfrog's *Hi-Octane* and will give you the following extra goodies:

- Split Screen Single Race: You can now play a two-player game on a single PC
- Clone Race: The computer creates a clone of your best lap and you have to beat it. A damn good way to improve your performance
- Death Match Option: Set the number of lives you each have, then blow one another to pieces

There are also extra tracks and a host of other gems. See the readme.txt file for more info.

***NB** This product requires a full version of* Hi-Octane

FIFA '96 (EA Sports)

The original *FIFA* was acclaimed as being one of the best ever football games for the PC. *FIFA '96* looks and plays even better than its predecessor. This demo lets you play a friendly game between Brazil and Italy.

Once the installation of the game is complete, you should calibrate your joystick (if applicable) in the options menu. Then click on the 'Friendly' icon, select your conditions and off you go!

Controls: Mouse, joystick and keyboard

Help!

Is the CD playing up? Is the HD stuck in the drive? Is your PC driving you nuts? Well panic no longer, because help is at hand in the form of Miles Tudor. Just pick up the phone and call one of these two numbers:

0171-917-7693

or

0171-917-7692

Lines are open between 10.30am and 5.30 pm Monday - Friday

If you are calling either help line, please take note of the following points:

- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down any relevant info.
- Have as much relevant information to hand as possible, ie system spec, amount of ram and base memory in your machine etc. Also remember the nature of the fault and which month's issue the CD or disk came from.
- Ideally you should have your PC running and at hand when you call.

IndyCar 2 (Virgin Interactive)

Well, it's been a long time coming, but we think you'll find it was worth the wait. *IndyCar 2* is, funnily enough, the sequel to the highly acclaimed *IndyCar Racing* released just over a year ago. This playable demo will give you a taste of what's in-store in the full game.

Controls: Joystick, mouse, keyboard

Terminator: Future Shock (US Gold)

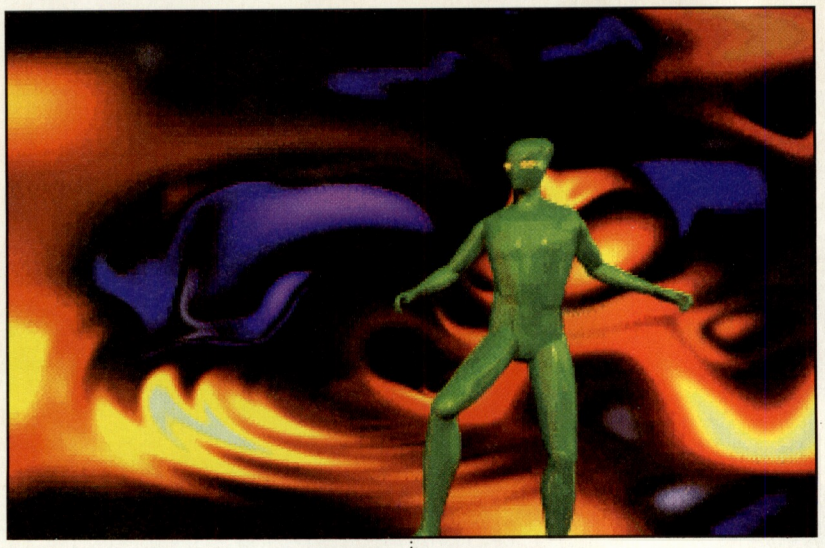
Bethesda has finally created a game that gives *Doom* a run for its money! This futuristic blast-fest is loosely based on the *Terminator* movies and features non-stop 'killing lots of robots' type gameplay.

Controls:

Up arrow	Point up
Down arrow	Point down
Left arrow	Turn left
Right arrow	Turn right
Ctrl	Fire gun
Right shift	Throw grenade
A	Move forward
Z	Move back
Left shift	Strafe left
X	Strafe right
1-5	Select gun
F1-F5	Select grenade
Alt	Speed on
C	Crouch
Spacebar	Activate
S	Jump
Tab	Automap
P	Pause



(Left) *Terminator* – giving *Doom* a run for its money?



(Left) Ripper from Gametek does a remarkably good impression of something that could well be drug induced.

(Below) Well... you can read, can't you?

Trivial Pursuit (Hasbro)

One of the biggest board games comes to the PC. *Trivial Pursuit* from Hasbro is everything the board game is plus more besides! There's video footage from classic films such as *Casablanca*, sound footage you have to identify, and animations too. The game runs in Windows and control is via the mouse.

***NB** Requires WinG and Win32. You'll find these in the essentials section of the browser*

3D Ultra Pinball (Sierra)

Sierra had a bit of a brainstorm and decided to combine a strategy game *(Outpost)* with a pinball game. Sounds a bit weird, huh? Well it is, but it's also brilliant! The graphics are stunning, the sound is amazing and it's just so incredibly addictive to boot.

Controls:

Down arrow	Shoot ball
Ctrl	Left flipper
Shift	Right flipper
Spacebar	Knock the table

Tilt (Virgin Interactive)

Pinball games are all the rage at the moment. This one's from Virgin Games, and pretty cool it is too. This playable demo has one of the tables from the full game. Select the resolution (depending on your machine spec) and away you go.

Controls:

Return	Shoot ball
Left shift	Left flipper
Right shift	Right flipper
Spacebar	Tilt table

Caesar 2 (Sierra)

This was a late arrival at *PC Zone*, which means it isn't included on the menu system. *Caesar* is a 'God-Sim' where you have to expand the Roman Empire into some god-forsaken hell hole (in this case Wales). You then have to build houses, a water supply, as well as providing education and all the other bits and bobs that go into a big city.

To install *Caesar* go into the directory on the CD by typing <CD Caesar>. Then type <Go_small.exe> and follow the instructions on screen. Once the game has installed, go to the install directory and type <Setsound>. Then type <C2demo> and you're in business.

Controls: Mouse.

Specifications: 4Mb, 486DX

ROLLING DEMOS

Actua Soccer (Gremlin Interactive)

This is the very best football game available for the PC. The graphics are gorgeous and the gameplay is frighteningly addictive. This rolling preview looks pretty good, but you won't fully appreciate how god-like it is until you've played it yourself. Make sure that you check out the playable demo on next month's CD.

Specifications: 4Mb

Ripper (Gametek)

This was a late arrival at the doors of *Zone*, but the footage was so good we just had to squeeze it on! This a sci-fi interactive-movie-film-thingie with a star-studded cast and music from old rock legends Blue Oyster Cult. To run the *Ripper* preview, go into DOS and go to the drive containing your CD. Then go into the Ripper directory by typing <CD Ripper>. Once you are in this sub directory type <Ripper.bat> and follow the instructions on screen.



Tech specs

Unless otherwise indicated the standard systems requirements for this month's software are as follows:

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2/66

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Big Red Racing (Domark)

Fancy a spot of highway aggro? Then look no further than *Big Red Racing* from Domark. This rolling demo will give you the gist of what the full game is all about. The final version will have 12 different vehicles, 18 different tracks and a multi-player option.

Specifications: 4Mb, 486DX

UTILITIES

Essentials

As always, we've gathered together the essential utilities to make life that little bit easier.

Graphic Workshop for Windows: Image viewing and file conversion

Winzip 6.0: Essential Windows front end for archiving files

Winzip 95 6.0: As above for Windows '95 users

Paint Shop Pro 3.11: Image editing and retouching

QuickTime for Windows 2.03: View movies on your PC

Video for Windows 1.1: View .Avis with ease

McAfee Anti-Virus: Shareware virus protection

McAfee Anti-Virus 95: Virus protection for Windows 95 users

Win32: 32-bit extensions for Windows 3.1 users

WinG: Microsoft's graphic engine for Windows 3.1 users

Internet applications

Ameol: Get on line to CIX with the best off-line reader around

Ameol 95 : As above, but for Windows 95 users

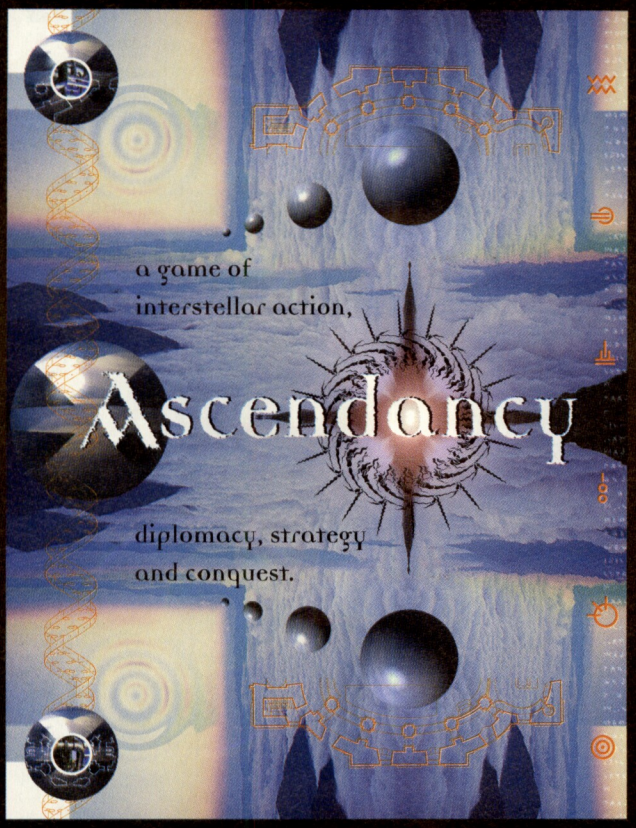
WebEdit: HTML editor for anybody wanting to set a home page

HotMetal: And another one!

Microsoft Internet Access: And another one too! (for *Word 6*)

Internet Decoding Application: UU, MIME, SHIP and BTOA Encoding/decoding. Essential for sending or receiving files over the Net.

Ascendancy



PC CD-ROM

THE LOGIC FACTORY

Virgin
INTERACTIVE
entertainment



The age of discovery is upon you.
Explore the unknown using a delicate balance
of courage and caution.
Ascendancy is a galactic strategy game of
exploration and encounter.
Take control of any one of the 21 species while
you attempt to cultivate your planet's
knowledge, industrial capabilities
and military might.
The survival of an entire species is at stake.
Will your people fade into obscurity or gain
ascendancy over a galaxy?



- Ascendancy's sophisticated Artificial Intelligence extends gameplay and offers indepth interaction and diplomacy with alien species.

- The game features superb SVGA graphics.

- The comprehensive tutorial mode coupled with a simple and intuitive interface ensures instant access to the game and in depth help throughout.

- Digital soundtrack featuring an original score and realistic sound effects.





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MICROPROSE

PC Zone proudly presents a CD packed to the brim with the latest demos, videos and information from software giants MicroProse.

To run the software on the disc, go to Program Manager in Windows 3.1 (or Explorer for Windows 95 users), click on mpsetup.exe and select RUN from the File Menu. You will then be asked if you want to install various utilities onto your hard drive that the MicroProse CD needs to run correctly. If you need to install either QuickTime for Windows, Video for Windows or Win G your machine will automatically reset itself after the software has been installed and you will need to RUN the mpsetup.exe from the File Menu to continue the installation process. Once the CD has been installed, double-click on the MicroProse icon to run.

Across The Rhine

Not the game, but a full length feature documentary film originally released as a standalone product along with *Across The Rhine* in the United States.

Across The Rhine runs in Windows and requires Video for Windows 1.1 (if you do not already have this software on your machine you will find it on this month's *PC Zone* cover CD). The documentary starts with the D-Day landings and explains why the Allies pushed into Germany and exactly how they did it, using real live contemporary footage, commentary, artwork and maps to re-tell the tale. If you enjoyed playing *ATR* you'll love this fascinating insight into the Second World War.

Transport Tycoon Deluxe

This game gives you all you need to build up a thriving railway and then run it into the ground and sell it off to the private sector (sound familiar?).

As far as game strategy goes, the only difference between this demo of *Transport Tycoon Deluxe* and the original game is that instead of coal mines, steel mills and refineries there are lollipop trees, candy floss factories and other sugar-filled related resources to exploit.

To start a new game select it from the menu, choose your character and place your company headquarters in an appropriate spot. Once you've done this, you should look for a suitable site to build your railway and then start to make some serious cash. The game is driven by icons at the top of the screen which you can use to build track, stations and control your empire.

If you haven't played *TT* before, click on the 'Help' icon and then click over an area to get a full description. This demo is restricted to rail only and a game time of two years.

Controls: Mouse
Minimum Spec: 486SX/25 4Mb RAM SVGA 4Mb of Hard Disk Space

Breakthru!

Based on the age-old but addictive brick filled original, the aim of *Breakthru!* is to match two or more bricks of the same colour that are side by side and clear the group as quickly as possible. As things get quicker (and more difficult) bombs, rockets and super bricks come into play to help you. Clear as many bricks as you can and watch the Berlin Wall crumble before your eyes. Simple, but highly addictive fun!

Controls: Mouse (left mouse button – drop clear matching blocks/right mouse button – drop down new bricks)
Minimum Spec: 486SX/25 4Mb RAM

This Means War!

Yet another real-time action-packed combat/resource management sim that will instantly appeal to fans of *Command & Conquer* and *Dune 2*.

The full version of *This Means War* features stunning hi-res graphics, multiple weapons, artillery, terrains and missions. This demo covers the basics of resource management and some of the combat elements. It's all mouse driven, so simply click on a unit and tell them where to go. The other icons instruct your squad to build, defend or attack, depending on the situation.

Controls: Mouse
Minimum Spec: 486DX 8Mb RAM

ClockWerx

From Alexey Pajitnov, the creator of that all-time classic *Tetris*. Using your skill and judgement, 'swing' your clock handles around a varying number of points, collecting bonus points, timers and a speed bonus. If it sounds complex and challenging that's because it is.

The demo has a comprehensive help system that explains the principles of *ClockWerx* and goes through the various controls and tricks that you will need to master the game.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard
Minimum Spec: 486SX 4Mb RAM

Star Trek: The Next Generation

One for all you Trekkies out there, this rolling demo will show you the delights of this recent release, the first in a line of talkie adventures from Spectrum HoloByte to feature the actual voices of old dome head Picard and his crew.

Featuring some of the best graphics you'll see in any point-and-click adventure, *Star Trek: TNG* has already topped the charts and looks set to carry on selling at least warp factor five.

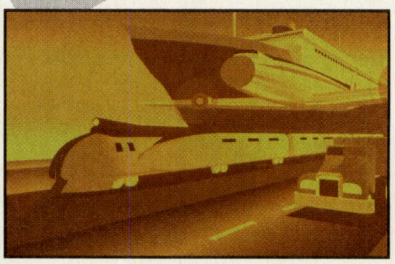
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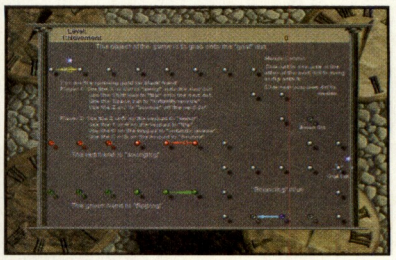
As if that wasn't enough, this exclusive MicroProse CD also includes trailers of some forthcoming releases, including the superb sequel to Geoff Crammond's best selling Formula 1 racing sim *F1GP2*; *Citizens*, a resource management strategy game, and *Magic The Gathering* which is the computerised version of the award-winning card game. There's also video footage from *Top Gun* – the flight sim based on the movie; *Virtual Karts* which promises to be one of the decades best racing games as well as *Grand Prix Manager* and *Ram Racer*.

Finally for veteran gamers and wannabe generals alike, there's *CivNet*. Based on the original classic *Civilization* this upgrade allows multi-player games to be played. Where as with the original you could only take over the world in single-player games, *CivNet* allows a number of players to assume command of different nations, making for a much more varied and interesting game.

You can access these sneak previews through the main menu screen. Believe us, you've never had it so good. **Z**







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Spectrum HoloByte - MicroProse World Wide Web Site: http://www.microprose.com

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BULLETIN

Toshinden & Tekken for the PC

TWO OF THE FINEST next-generation console products to emerge this year are set to be released on the PC in just a few month's time.

The PC versions of the chart toppers *Toshinden* and *Tekken* will feature the same super-smooth, texture-mapped polygon graphics, combi moves and sound of the original coin-op and console versions.

They're also expected to support one of the new graphics accelerator boards (possibly the Nvidia or 3D Blaster) to be launched in a few week's time.

Whether the PC versions will be comparable in terms of speed and quality will largely depend on how successful the new accelerator boards are at handling the massive graphical demands of such processor intensive games, although initial reports to date would indicate that as the architecture is lifted directly from the consoles themselves, results should be quite favourable.





Not Quite PSX

Spectravideo is releasing two new gamepads, one of which looks distinctly similar to the Sony PlayStation gamepad.

The PC Power Pad features four fire buttons, with semi-auto and full auto-fire control, and the familiar (though effective) grip design for superior handling and retails for around £12.99. The PC Sprint Pad features six buttons, individual auto-fire control and an eight-way directional facility and costs around £14.99.

Contact Spectravideo on 0181-902 2211 for further details.



Doom: The Master Levels

If you can tear yourself away from *Hexen* long enough, you might just be interested to hear that GT Interactive has just released *Doom: The Master Levels*.

Retailing at an extraordinarily reasonable £29.99, it includes 20 'never seen before' *Doom 2* levels designed by iD Software, 300 megs (that's 3,000 – count 'em) hand-picked *Doom* WADS from amateur WAD builders, four new levels from UK Deathmatch champion André and some Deathmatch specific treats.

Doom: The Master Levels is out now. You can telephone GT Interactive on 0171-258 3791 for further details.





Rise 2 Surprise

Amazing but strangely enough true, the sequel to quite possibly one of the most boring beat 'em ups ever is looking surprisingly smart. The developers have apparently listened very hard to all the criticism levelled at the original and have made a lot of improvements to ensure that this time it's worthy of the hype. As a result, the all-new singin', dancin' and leapin' *Rise 2: Resurrection* now features no less than 28 characters, a plethora of weapons and projectiles, improved AI, interactive backgrounds, parallax scrolling and loads more moves per character.

And in case you didn't know, 'legendary' pop guitarist Brian 'Nice Perm Shame About The Face' May has supplied music specially written for the game, and the developers have also included a tournament editor which allows the player to completely customise the difficulty setting, so it should be much better than the original, especially if you're a Queen fan.

Rise 2: Resurrection is scheduled for release in February next year.



Ultimate Soccer Manager Season Update

Fans of the chart-topping *Ultimate Soccer Manager* should be delighted to hear that Sierra (who has since bought out Impressions) is planning to release a new season add-on disc.

As well as updating *USM* to the end of the 94/95 season and incorporating all the big name transfers, the developers have ensured that all of the European qualifying teams are correct for the 95/96 season. The full season for the Italian league has also been included, which means that you can now take the role of a manager in the Italian domestic league.

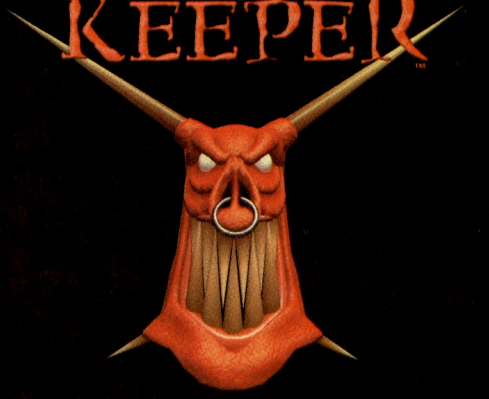
They've also made the amount of cash you start with variable, added the facility to edit the club names, improved the graphs, fixture lists and sorted out the few bugs that plagued the original version.

The New Season Add-on disc is available now and will retail for just under a tenner. Contact Sierra on 01734 303322 for further details. »

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Wipeout The Music Album

Computer games are now officially cool, thanks to the likes of Sony Interactive (formerly called Psygnosis) who has not only produced some of the finest releases of the year (insert *Destruction Derby, Wipeout, Discworld* etc here), but for making sure that the sounds that accompany them are tracks you want to turn up rather than turn off.

Just in case you can't bear to drag yourself away from the thumping music that accompanies Wipeout and are worried that you're not eating (or sleeping for that matter), Sony has released *Wipeout – The Music Album.*

Featuring tracks from such established cred artists as Leftfield, The Chemical Brothers, Orbital, New Order, The Prodigy and The Shamen, the CD includes almost 80 minutes of "fast beats, adrenaline rush and attitude". Although the PC version doesn't actually feature any of the tracks on the album (the PSX version of the game features four), the music on the audio CD will allegedly help you improve your fastest lap time by around 20 per cent, but only if you turn down the sound on your PC and whack your stereo's volume up to maximum. The *Wipeout Music Album* is available from all usual outlets. In case of difficulty, contact Sony Interactive on 0151-282 3000.



Power Dolls

ANIMÉ FANS MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN A NEW STRATEGY GAME from Megatech Software curiously entitled *Power Dolls*.

The game came about after developers Megatech teamed up with the Kogado studio in Japan and conceived an idea to produce a strategy battle simulation that would be appealing to the less experienced strategy gamer. The result is a turn-based, top-down, futuristic paramilitary simulation that requires the player to launch a realistic rebellion using an elite force of highly trained and extremely deadly female cyberwarriors. It's set in the future (of course) and features loads of gratuitous Animé-style characters and animations, and because it utilises a very simple to use mouse-driven interface, it's easy to get into. Whether or not the AI is up to standard is anyone's guess, though we should be able to tell you more in our next issue, when we'll be running a full review.





Rayman

PLATFORM GAMES HAVEN'T REALLY MADE MUCH of an impact on the PC, and apart from a couple of Mega Drive and SNES conversions (namely *The Lion King* and *Aladdin*), there really hasn't been that much around to tempt the Sonic or Mario fan away from their 16-bit boxes to the PC.

Well, if UbiSoft has anything to do with it, that's about to change. Its new platformer *Rayman* takes full advantage of new 32-bit technology to bring new life to the rather hackneyed genre. For starters *Rayman* is absolutely massive (allegedly bigger than any other platform game ever) and boasts six worlds and over 70 levels, a non-linear story line, over 50 different characters, cutesy animation and over 45 funky soundtracks.

It's pretty damn fast too, with a blistering 60fps on a modest Pentium, and as the game's Windows 95 compatible, you just stick it in your drive and away you go. Easy!

Rayman is due for release on the PC any time now, costing around £29.99. Contact UbiSoft on 0181-941 4004 for further details.

Don't Buy A Console

According to Microsoft, it's a bad idea to go and spend 300 quid on a new console when you can upgrade to Windows 95 for just £70.

At the recent Windows 95 Games Launch which took place across the pond in the good ol' USA in Seattle at the Microsoft Campus recently, Bill Gates appeared via video at the US press launch armed with a *Doom* shotgun, picking off orcs and demons to tell the world that there would be 75 games titles available for Windows 95 by Christmas, and that Microsoft would be supporting the PC as the games platform of the future.

According to internal research, Microsoft maintains that over 28 per cent of PC usage is spent playing games and has urged retailers to sell Windows 95 games separately from other software, just as they would any other games format in an effort to promote the 'games platform of the future'. This is the first time Microsoft has focused explicitly on the gameplaying capabilities of its new operating system, and to back up the new, aggressive marketing strategy it's decided to launch a Windows 95 CD sampler featuring 20 playable demos from major games publishers, for just £9.95. The CD sports an interface based on a 3D *Doom*-style space station containing publisher billboards, which allows users to access game demos and product information, as well as – hooray! – Internet hooks which link users directly to a publisher's Web site.

But before you get too excited, the game demos on the CD aren't exactly worth wetting your pants over – there's *Trityst*, a *Tetris*-style game from Virgin; *Big Red Racing* from Domark; *Cyberspeed* from Mindscape and *The Hive* from Trimark Interactive, but if you want to be a part of the Microsoft revolution or are stuck for Christmas pressie ideas then you could do worse – you could always go out and buy *Cyberbykes*.

What is worth going gooey over, however, is the first product to make it out of Dreamworks Interactive, the joint venture between Bill Gates and Stephen Spielberg. The pair is currently working on adventure titles for the group and initial reports suggest that whatever they're doing, it *will* be worth waiting for. We'll bring you more on this as and when we get it.

The Microsoft Windows 95 CD-ROM sampler disc is available now from all the usual outlets. Contact Microsoft on 01734 270000 for details.

"Dungeon Keeper could almost be described as Theme Park™ with goblins."
PC Review



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Dispatches

+++ *No Calia 2095*

Rumours are abounding that LucasArts' new cartoonesque shoot 'em up *Calia 2095* has been dropped. The 3D blastarama was originally slated for a December release, and was to feature an enhanced *Dark Forces* engine with comic book-style graphics. Reasons for abandoning the product are unclear, although one explanation is that the subject matter (a city on the west coast which finds itself in anarchic chaos after being reduced to rubble following a terrible earthquake) was a bit too close to the bone. The standard line, however, is that the team has been put to work on more important projects (presumably the next *Indy* adventure or even *Monkey Island 3*).

+++ *High Speed Sales*

Sony's *Destruction Derby* (last month's cover review) has become the UK's fastest selling CD game ever. The game went straight in at number one, shifting more units than the previous record holder, Virgin's spooge-tastic *Command & Conquer*. But if you still need convincing that *Destruction Derby* really is a must-have, play the demo on this month's cover CD and see for yourself.



+++ *Ocean On A Budget*

Ocean has just released details of a new budget range of games that will retail for under a fiver. The initial 'Regenerator' range will include such classics as *Zool, Nigel Mansell's Championship Racing, Lotus 3, Central Intelligence,* and *Sleepwalker.* All titles will retail at the wallet-friendly price of £4.99, and a further line-up of 'Regenerator' products is planned for release before Christmas.



+++ *Plug & Play SCSI Drive*

TEAC UK has just announced details of a new Plug & Play SCSI version of its six-speed CD-ROM drive. The TEAC CD56-S SCSI has a 256Kb data buffer, produces a 139ms access time and a transfer rate of 900Kb/sec and uses the standard FAST SCSI interface. It can also be mounted either horizontally or vertically and is 100 per cent DOS, Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 compatible. The CD56-S is expected to retail for around £279. Contact TEAC UK on 01923 225235.

Return Fire For Windows

Anyone remember a game called *Capture The Flag*? The basic idea behind the game was to manoeuvre your team into your opponent's playing area and then, guess what? You captured his flag! Sounds a bit crap, doesn't it? Well actually, it's not, if thousands of 3DO owners are to be believed (we'll leave you to use your own judgement here). Either way, Time Warner Interactive is releasing a Windows 95 version of the game called *Return Fire,* which they say is highly addictive. The game supports the new high-speed Microsoft DirectDraw™ API and will offer windowed and full-screen modes, multiple ending sequences and a new, intricately designed map. A greater variety of gameplay will also be on offer. Players won't simply have to capture their opponent's flag, they'll actually have to *protect* their own one as well. Blimey! Paul Osborne, director of multimedia at Microsoft, informs us (naturally without any bias whatsoever): "*Return Fire* is a great example of the high quality of gameplay available for Windows 95."

To be fair, *Return Fire* has a lot more features and is much more action-orientated than the original concept of *Capture The Flag.* Apart from the superior graphics, you have lots of vehicles to play with, including jeeps, helicopters and armoured personnel carriers. You could almost call it a strategic, arcade shoot 'em up. This is definitely one of those games that will turn out to be either totally brilliant and addictive or, er, a bit crap. *Return Fire* should be out at the end of this month. For more info call Time Warner Interactive on 0171-391 4300.

DOS Is Dead

If you believe the carefully planned hype, this time next year it will be almost impossible to buy a DOS-based PC game. It might sound impossible, but that's exactly what Microsoft believes, and that's what publishers Virgin, EA, Gremlin and Interplay are saying too.

Although publishers will continue to produce and sell DOS and Windows 95 games this Christmas, come next year all the major publishers will be producing Windows 95-native products only and will never develop for DOS again. So far it hasn't been a smooth journey for the new gaming platform, with end users still having problems with DOS-based games running under Windows 95 in MS DOS mode; in fact, Electronic Arts is increasing its support team by 30 per cent. But it's not all doom and gloom – EA says 70 per cent of the calls to its technical support lines are from PC users with configuration and installation problems, and once Windows 95 native software becomes the norm, the company expects this to plummet. Good news for end users and publishers alike.



BT Plays By Wire

Network gaming, Modem Head-to-Head, Telegaming – call it what you will but the future, as readers of our regular *Doom Watch* column will know, is multi-player. Every night, hundreds of gamers around the country rack up pounds, shillings and pence dialling each other or dedicated game servers like Gamesnet and The Forest, playing the likes of *Doom, Descent, Command & Conquer, Heretic,* and, of course, *Yahtzee.* But now big boys British Telecom are getting in on the act, with the launch of Wireplay in early '96.

Unlike existing servers, Wireplay will offer local connect points, a 'match-making' system to put you in touch with like-minded players (and call you up to remind you), and direct billing to your phone bill. Other than that, it's the fairly run-of-the-mill stuff we've seen with DWANGO and The Games Connection. You obtain the client software free with cover discs or games, then dial in and enter a 'foyer' area complete with noticeboard and chat rooms. To play a game you either leave an appropriate message on the board ("I am the UberFragMeister™ – You will die at 8pm on *Doom 2*" etc), or meet someone on on-line and threaten them face to face. Important stuff such as ladders, tournaments and competitions will be fully automated.

Plans are also afoot to launch a Web-style news and magazine area, software downloads, and 'clubs' – areas only accessible by special passwords. At the present moment software companies like Electronic Arts, Gremlin, Interplay, MicroProse and Mindscape have all expressed their support. The system goes into beta-test in January and will be on-line "in the summer". The price hasn't been decided yet (chinny reckon) but is expected to be around the £1 to £1.50 rate currently charged by other servers. You'll need a modem of course (9600 or faster) and a benevolent god of a phone-owning parent to fully exploit the system.

Look out for a serious endoscopic exploration of the Wireplay system in this very magazine very soon.



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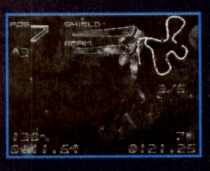
a RACE

"FRANTIC RACING BONANZA." - GAMEPRO

to die

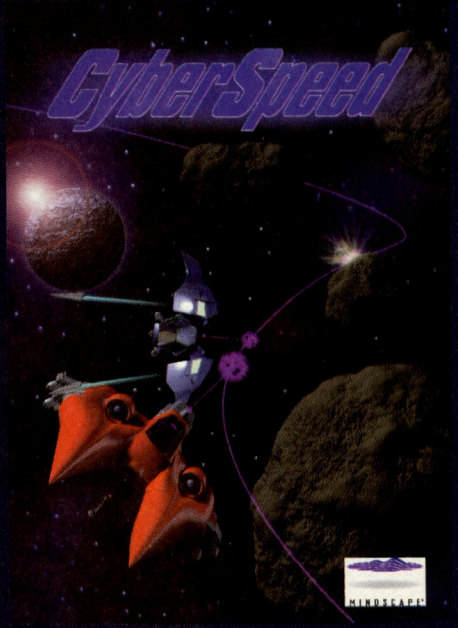
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(Right) The PowerStick from EXOS – sure to be popular with the ladies...

Dispatches

+++ Dungeon Keeper Delayed
The release date of the eagerly awaited *Dungeon Keeper* from Bullfrog has been postponed, and is now expected to be released in February next year. The game was originally due out before Christmas but has been put back "to ensure the game runs acceptably on a 486DX/33". Nice to see a developer doing its utmost to reach the widest possible audience. Origin please take note.



+++ GoldenEye On The Net
The official James Bond and GoldenEye Cyber Store is now open. Net users can access information, video clips and images, as well as details of officially licensed products and even purchase certain products using the revolutionary Netsafe Titan Secure Credit Card Transaction System. There's a free-to-enter competition for users, the star prize being a rather nice very limited edition Cagiva motorbike resplendent in its 007 and GoldenEye logoised paintwork. Other prizes include a top of the range IBM Thinkpad Laptop PC and goodies from Perrier, Smirnoff and Church Footwear.
For further details contact The Resource Centre on http://www.goldeneye.themes.com.

+++ 3 in 1 Bargain Alert!
7th Level has put together a special limited edition three-in-one-pack featuring the award-winning *Monty Python's Complete Waste Of Time, Take Your Best Shot* and *Tuneland*. The bundle will retail at £49.99 and would make an ideal stocking filler for the PC gamer with everything. Contact 7th Level on 01932 355666 for further details.

+++ Nvidia NASCAR
Award-winning US developer Papyrus *(IndyCar Racing, NASCAR)* is currently working on an enhanced 3D version of *NASCAR Racing* which will be bundled with the Nvidia graphics board when it's released shortly. Good news for *NASCAR* fans who don't yet own a P6!!



Can You Feel It?

IMAGINE NOT JUST SEEING AND HEARING A GAME BUT, ER, FEELING it too! That's the promise of Massachussetts-based developer EXOS, which is busy knocking up a series of programmable joysticks with Force Feedback™ technology.

As the name implies, each joystick provides feedback to the user. It does this with a series of heavy duty motors and, well, a whole host of other stuff. The result is that you can feel your car crash, your gun recoil, the right-hand jab from a boxer and more! It even provides subtle effects – from turbulence in flight simulators to slippery road surfaces in racing games.

The first in the range of joysticks, the imaginatively-named PowerStick, should appear early next Autumn at a price somewhere under £200. The device has been specifically designed for use with Windows 95, and over 50 games are expected to support it by the end of 1996, including *Doom 2* (we tried a prototype PowerStick with this and it was indeed 'cool'). Future projects include an arcade version of the PowerStick, a PowerWheel and a PowerPad.

So who exactly is EXOS? Well, a spokesbloke from the company revealed that it has previously worked on projects for NASA and the US Department of Defence. But then he would say that, wouldn't he? I mean, who's gonna check?

Private Investigators and those who wish to know more about these joysticks (other magazines who have missed this story, for instance), can call EXOS on (USA) 001 617 933 0022. And tell 'em *PC Zone* sent ya.



Debbie Does Double Switch

Ex-Blondie popster and occasional movie actress Debbie Harry is now turning her attention to games, or interactive movie adventures to be precise.

Double Switch is a 'mystery adventure' featuring over 20 weird and whacky characters who you must follow through an even more weird and whacky plot. By controlling the action throughout the game (by clicking on things, picking them up and answering multiple choice questions – yawn!) you must try to save the main character (some wooden-top called Eddie who's trapped in the basement), find some treasure and, to round it all off, uncover various 'unsolved mysteries'.

If interactive movie type things, laden with FMV clips and out-of-work actors (or in this case, tonsil-tired artistes) are your thing, or in other words you actually enjoyed *Phantasmagoria*, then give Digital Pictures a bell on (USA) 415 345 5300 for further details.

Sega In 'PC Games' Shock

Sega, creator of the seminal Mega Drive games console and fluffy cheeky chappie corporate mascot Sonic The Hedgehog, is finally having a stab at the PC games market.

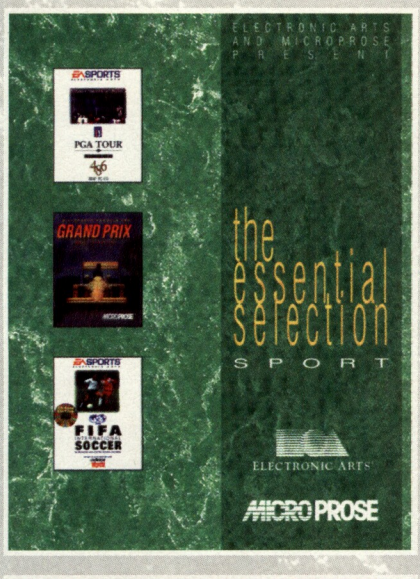
Riding on the cusp of its success with the Mega Drive 32X *(Who he? – Ed.)* and The Saturn, its recently-released 'super console', the Japanese games company is set to release three of its oldie-but-goldie 16-bit games, plus a rash of newly-coded 32-bit stuff.

Running on Windows 95 only and set to debut in February 1996 are *Ecco The Dolphin* (best selling porpoise 'em up), *Comix Zone* (interesting beat 'em up set in the pages of a violent comic), and *TomCat Alley* (video-based flight sim 'on rails'). These 16-bit games will feature enhanced graphics, sounds and options, but no new levels and not much in the way of expanded gameplay. Ho-hum.

More interestingly, however, is the impending conversion of some of the Sega Saturn's most spooged-over hits, namely *Virtua Fighter, Panzer Dragoon* and *Daytona Racing*. Pooh-poohing the existing processing power of the Pentium, Sega has saddled up with multimedia developer Diamond (of Stealth 64 fame), to support its new 3D accelerator card, the Diamond Edge, which sports a new ninja chip called Nvidea. Basically this will allow, under Windows 95 again (eek), we humble PC users to experience the polygon, raytraced, texture-mapped delights of Saturn games at a full 60 frames per second, as well as improved Windows graphics performance, Wavetable sound, and Sega controller ports on a single card (prices start at £250 for a basic DRAM card). A bundle scheduled to be released this month will feature a Diamond Edge card, plus *Virtua Fighter, Panzer Dragoon,* and an enhanced version of Interplay's 3D spacer *Descent* (although this is not confirmed as yet and details may change).

For more information, contact Sega UK on 0171-373 3000.

MicroProse & Electronic Arts present...

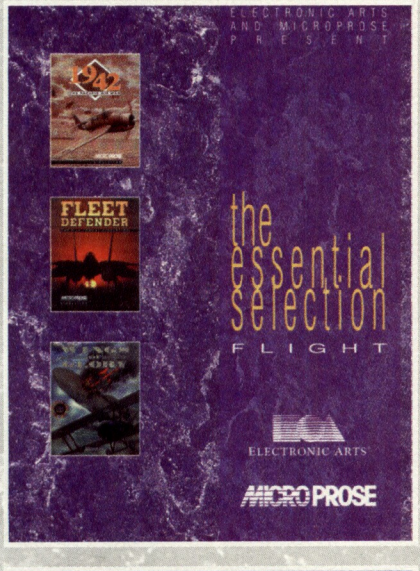


SPORTS

PGA TOUR® 486
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FIFA International Soccer
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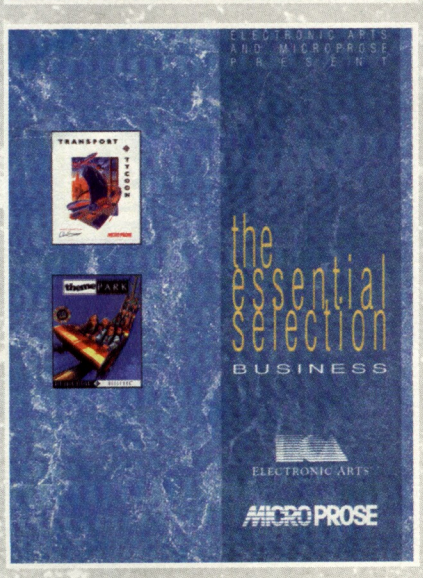


FLIGHT

1942 Pacific Air War
93% PC Games

Fleet Defender
88% PC Gamer

Wings of Glory™
89% PC Power



BUSINESS

Transport Tycoon
9/10 PC Review

Theme Park™
93% PC Zone

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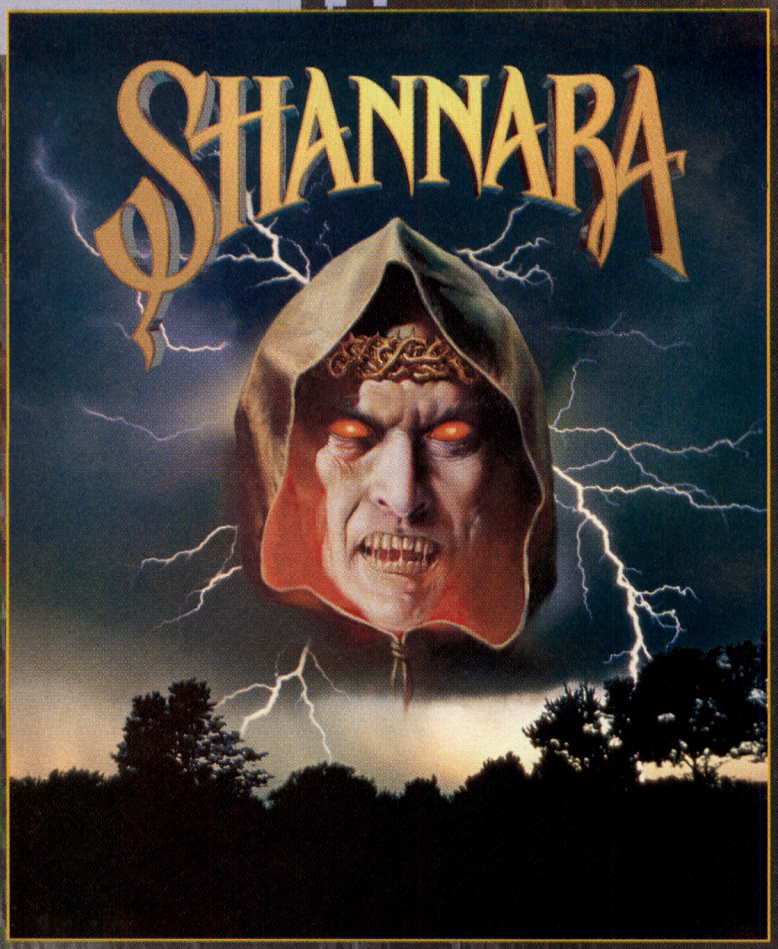
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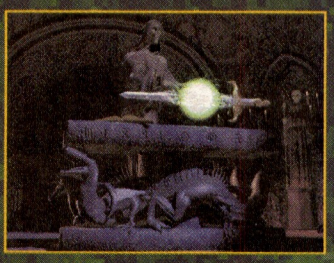


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Dogz Life

Want a dog, but can't be arsed to take it for walks, play with it, feed it – that sort of thing? Then *Dogz*, a new Windows (3.1 and 95) 'screen toy' from PF Magic, is probably right up your alley, offering as it does "all the joys of dog ownership without the need for a pooper scooper!" (NB We'd like to point out it's PF Magic's exclamation mark, not ours.)

Adopt one of five dogs and then watch adoringly as he or she grows over the weeks! Pick him up! Pet him! Stroke his genitals! (Probably.) "Train your Dogz by reinforcing positive behaviours with doggy treats and punishing negative with a playful squirt of the spray bottle." (Yeah, right.) Stroke his genitals! Play hide 'n' seek, fetch, tug-o-war or the rather intriguing game called PaintBallz! Stroke the dog's genitals!

But, hey, get your mind out of the gutter – you can only have one dog on screen at any one time. Although the programmers are working on such an option, getting two dogs to, er, 'interact', is apparently quite difficult. Oh well.

PF Magic, the American company behind *Dogz* (so to speak) is best known for the Mega Drive and 3DO beat 'em up, *Ballz* ('z's are big in this company). A UK distributor has yet to be confirmed, although you can download an adoption kit from www.pfmagic.com/dogz/adopt if you're netted-up. A feline version may follow, although as the bloke-ess from PF Magic pointed out, "Cats don't do a lot, do they?" It'll come though, and it'll be called Catz. Trust us.



(Above) Some bright spark is probably designing a shotgun add-on module for Dogz as you read this.

Fallen Angel

MINDSCAPE HAS A NUMBER OF RELEASES PLANNED FOR EARLY next year. *Angel Devoid* is a photo-realistic adventure game (note how we cleverly avoided the term 'interactive movie') which puts you in the rather confusing role of 'person who wakes up in a hospital bed not feeling very well, having been beaten up and with a completely new face'. Apparently, the guy who beat you up is a dodgy criminal you were chasing, and – yikes! – it's his face that now greets you when you look at yourself in the mirror. From here your task is to escape from the hospital, try to track him down, find out what's going on and sort out the whole world while you're at it. Anyway, confusing or not, we saw it in the office and it looks very nice. Expect a full review next month.

Mindscape is also working on *Atripolis*, an arcade adventure with over 600 locations to explore covering five city districts. *Atripolis* is a living city where everyone has their own objectives and goals and will react intelligently to whatever's going on around them. The game has over 50 minutes of speech and original audio CD tracks. Also due next year is *Azrael's Tear*, a 3D role-playing adventure with sophisticated puzzles and spectacular graphics (yes, we *have* seen it and it looks awesome). We should be reviewing these in the next issue, but in the meantime you can call Mindscape on 01444 246333 if you require more information.



Warcraft 2

Zablac Entertainment will be distributing the sequel to *Warcraft* in the UK. Apart from new multi-player network and modem options, the main improvement for the sequel is the addition of several new vehicles. The battle is now fought on land, sea and air, so players will have to manage and control submarines, zeppelins and battleships as well as the ground units featured in the original game. Unfortunately we don't have any in-game shots to show you (hence the intro shots), but the game will apparently be in the shops by the time you read this, so if you're really keen you can just rush out and buy it. A more sensible option, of course, would be to wait for our review in the next issue where of course we'll give you the full low-down.

If you want more details, contact Zablac on 01626 332233.





Dispatches

+++ *Abuse Goes To The Movies*

Crack Dot Coms arcade platform game *Abuse* may prove to be the inspiration for a block-buster movie. Dave Taylor of iD software, lead programmer on *Doom 2* and the soon to be released *Quake*, is currently discussing the project with Universal Studios. Dave is joint partner of Crack Dot Com, alongside Jonathan Clark, who programmed *Abuse*. Quite why Universal would want to produce a movie based on a shareware platform game is still a mystery to us all. Equally mysterious is the news that there will be a comic book series of *Abuse* released in the States just before Christmas – there's obviously a worldwide underground *Abuse* cult forming that we know nothing about. If you want to find out more about any of these mysteries, please call Gaming Central on 01624 861233.

+++ *Cyberia Gaming Challenge*

Cyberia Internet Café in London is celebrating ten years of on-line gaming by holding a special Gamers Forum, during which there will be a reflective and 'amusing' look at gaming history. The highlight of the event will be a PC games challenge in which magazine journalists will battle against each other. Exactly which game (or games) will be featured is not yet clear, but Karen from Cyberia Café says *Doom* probably won't be included since *PC Zone* is currently home to Macca McCandless, the DoomMeister™ himself, so it wouldn't be fair to pit him against less talented bods from other mags. Fair enough, we say. The event will be held from 7 to 10pm on 14 December and gamers are invited to come along and cheer on their fave mag (that's us, of course). Entry is free but will be by ticket only – if you'd like one contact Arabella on 0171-209 0982 or arabella@easynet.co.uk. For more information contact Karen Durham-Diggins on 0171-209 0962 or kdd@easynet.co.uk.

+++ *IBM Wakes Up To Games*

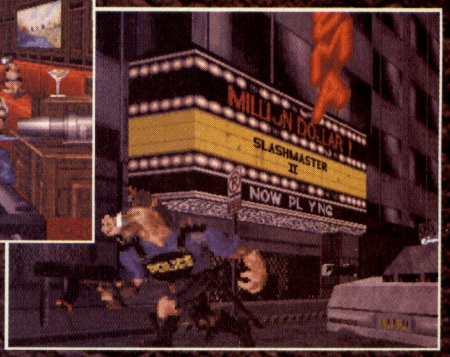
IBM is taking Microsoft's cue and plunging into the game market with a number of releases due over the next couple of weeks. *Pro League Football* is an American footie game in which players can coach their dream team, design their own plays and access more than three decades of real NFL information. *Rapid Assault* is an all-out arcade action game set in eight environments with over 20 missions. *Triple Threat* is a three-in-one games pack containing a selection of arcade games. Look out for reviews of these games in our next issue. For more details phone 01753 790700.


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- Gamesmaster

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"It makes pretty much every PC game we've ever seen - Doom included - look slightly dull. Honestly!"

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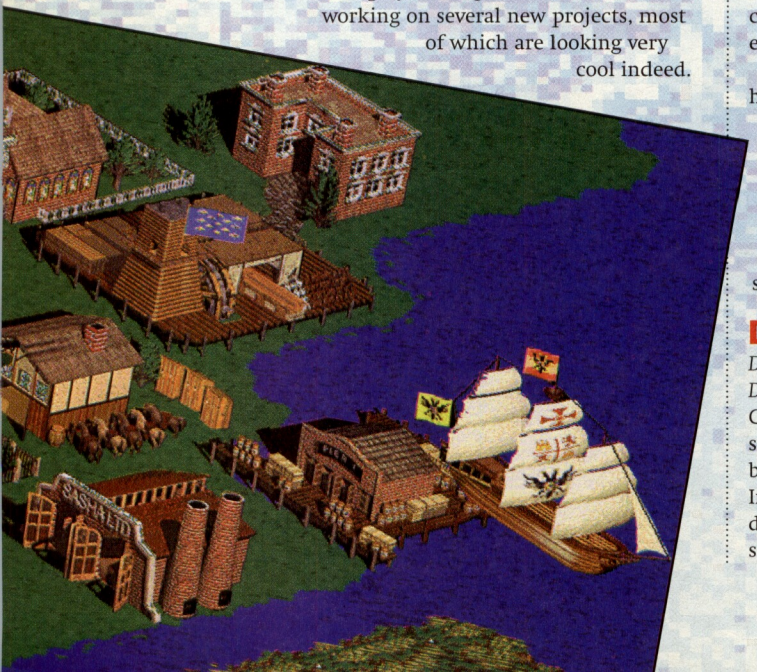
AT HOME WITH... INTERPLAY



"What's happening with Interplay in Los Angeles?" we innocently asked Chris Anderson, our self-styled US correspondent. "Why, I think I'll just pop over and find out," he replied, before buggering off with a large suitcase.

(Above) *Descent 2* looks the absolute business...

(Below) While *Conquest Of The New World* looks, er, a bit like *Civilization*.



THE CHAPS AT INTERPLAY ARE HAPPY and content. *Descent* has sold by the bucketload, they've signed the rights for the official AD&D licence from TSR and best of all, they've finally finished *Stonekeep*, which is the game they've been working on for about seventy millenniums (you can see our review of the game in this issue). While all this has been going on, the various Interplay development teams have been working on several new projects, most of which are looking very cool indeed.

LA trip alert

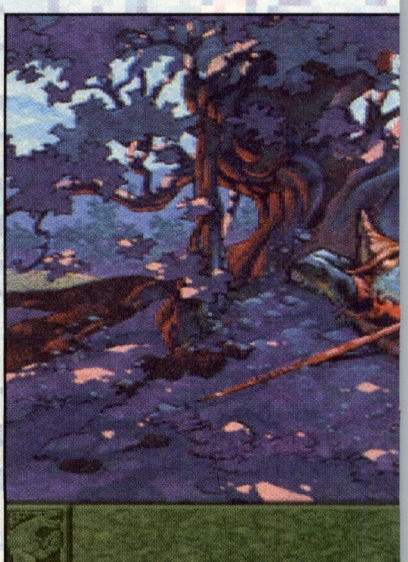
I took Interplay up on its very generous invitation to visit the HQ in Los Angeles to check out its new games. On arrival I discovered that the company is somewhat divided at the moment – literally! Its offices simply aren't big enough to accommodate all the new staff taken on due to Interplay's rapid expansion. As a result, the teams presently occupy two large buildings, while the search continues for somewhere spacious enough to house them all together.

This should give you some idea of how Interplay has grown beyond recognition over the last couple of years, and from what I've seen of the products currently in development, that trend looks set to continue. Here's a rundown of the new titles currently in development at Interplay, starting with the big one...

Descent 2

Descent was the first game to ever give *Doom* a serious run for its money. Critically acclaimed, and with massive sales backing up the confidence shown by the press, it turned out to be Interplay's biggest game ever. We had a demo of the sequel, which looked very smart indeed, so it was easy to see why producer Rusty Buchert was so excited. "I had a very jaded test team working on *Descent 2*," he said. "They all liked it. Players will feel it's genuinely different to the original."

Well, I have to say that at first glance it didn't really *look* any different, but then in all fairness I suppose you'd have to play it to be able to tell. It certainly boasts a lot of new features though, including a missile camera, and a BUDDY BOT (working title) who works with you, exploring dangerous terrain and leaving flares for you to follow.







There are 18 new opponents, ten new weapons and the levels are more complex. The presentation has been improved too: there's now an SVGA mode, the scenery's been made more exciting with the addition of flowing water and lava, and the whole thing is helped along by a groovy new backing track supplied by Skinny Puppy.

Overall, it sounds like there'll be enough new bells and whistles to keep *Descent* veterans happy. The game's not due until February, but you'll be able to try the three-level shareware version when it comes out later this month.

Conquest Of The New World

The designers of this game originally drew their inspiration from a strategy board game called *Source Of The Nile*, though you wouldn't think so to look at it. From the bit I saw of *Conquest Of The New World*, it looks pretty much like *Civilization*, the classic strategy game from MicroProse. This is no bad thing of course, but before you all start shouting "Great new *Civ* game alert", I think that I ought to point out that it's actually only similar to *Civ* at surface level.

For a start there's only five pre-set levels to get through – after that you have to make up your own. To be frank, *Conquest* doesn't appear to offer much as a standalone game, but that's not the market it's aimed at. Vince DeNardo, the game's producer explains: "The game really comes into its own when played against human opponents across a network. It doesn't take too long to play and you'll keep coming back to it for a quick half an hour or so."

Conquest Of The New World should be out at the end of January 1996.

AD&D Products:

Blood And Magic

This is the game that impressed me the most out of everything I saw. It's a strategy game that's not a million miles away from *Warcraft*, except that the graphics are much better and there's a whole lot more to do. Instead of managing resources, you need to keep an eye on how much mana your fantasy characters have got before going forth to take on thine evil foe. This is a very good looking game, with an excellent backing track, and you can bet your life I'll be pouncing on the review copy when it comes in early next year.

Descent To Under Mountain

No, it's not just a spooky coincidence that this game has '*Descent*' in the title. This is an all-action fantasy RPG that uses the *Descent* engine to give players the ability to walk around in a true 3D environment – they can even fly if they've got the appropriate spell. You can choose your own race from any of 40 characters before setting out on a quest to find a magic flame sword, which incidentally is the ultimate objective of the game. The graphics, even at this early stage, are looking impressive and the character animation is shaping up nicely. The similarities to the best-selling *Descent* game are quite obvious, so this could be a cracker. We'll give you a full report when it comes out in the first quarter of next year.

Dragon Dice

Of all the AD&D products Interplay is currently working on, this one is the closest in concept to the original board game, in as much as you use dice to determine hit points and so on. At the start of play you place your armies strategically on the main playing screen, and then you can zoom in on a close-up of the terrain to get a better look at the combat. The first player to control five territories wins.

Dragon Dice is scheduled to be out sometime in the first quarter of 1996.

Bye bye

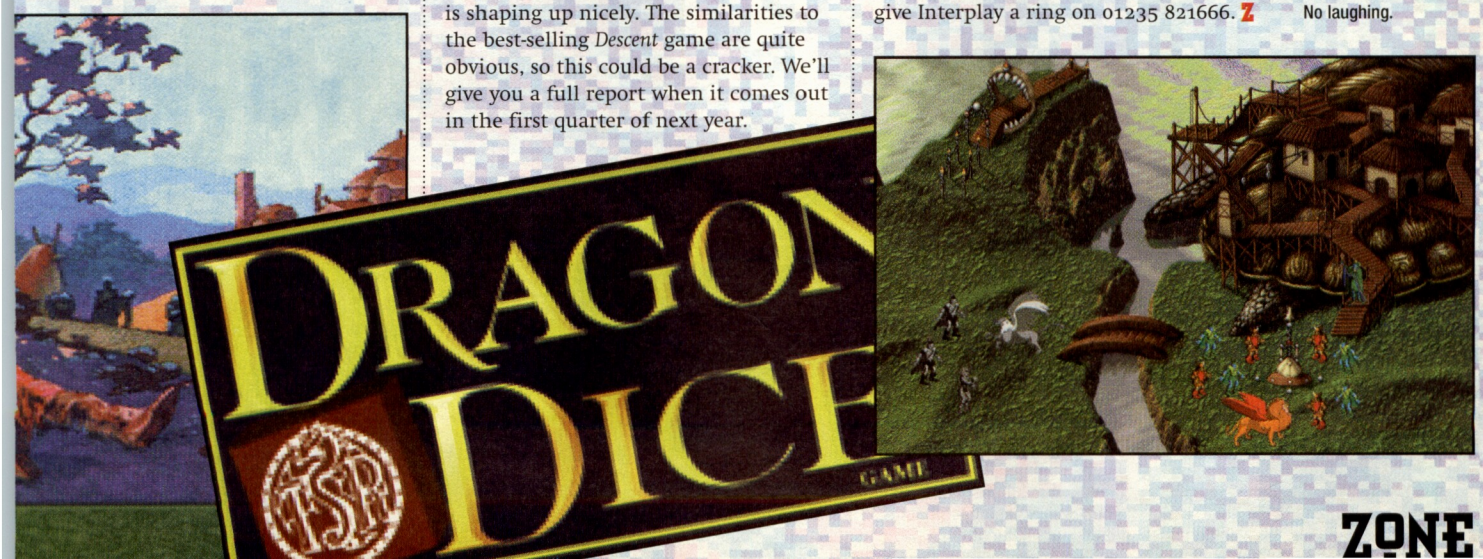
Er, that's about it really, except to say that the Interplay PR team (Hi Neal!) did its job extremely well by keeping all the UK, German and French games press supplied with vast amounts of alcohol for the entire trip (though as you can imagine, the Germans and French gave up trying to compete with pros like us after the first night, bloody lightweights).

For more on Interplay, check out the reviews of *Stonekeep* and *Frankenstein* in this very issue; should you need more details on any of the titles covered here, give Interplay a ring on 01235 821666. Z

(Above left) I wouldn't argue with this bloke if I were you.

(Above) *Descent* meets RPG-type bods in *Descent To Under Mountain.*

(Below) *Dragon Dice* is the sort of game that may very well appeal to true-blooded retro RPG-ers. Oi! No laughing.



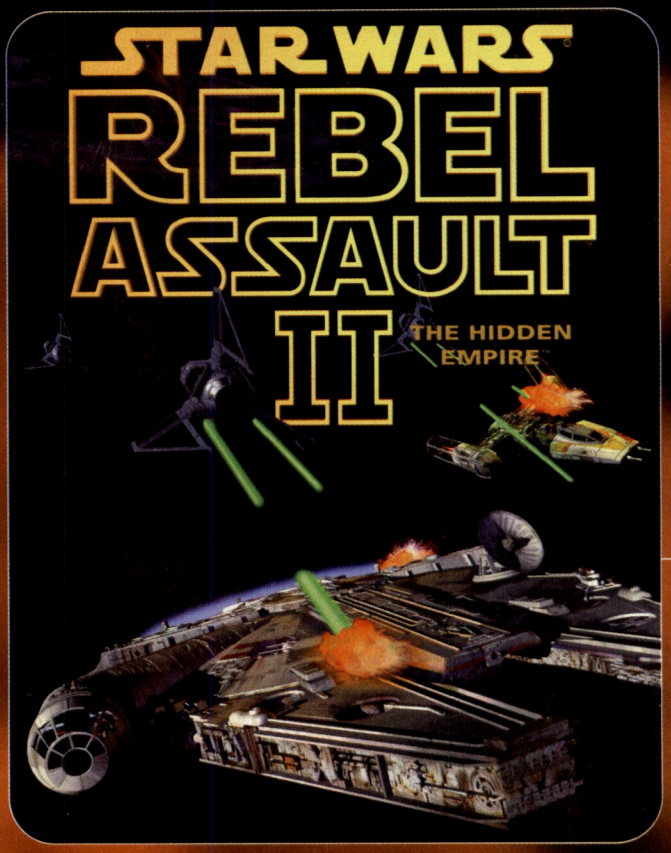
The story opens in the vicinity of the Dreighton Nebula - a strange and eerie region with the reputation for being the Bermuda Triangle of the galaxy. Legends reach back as far as the early days of hyperspace travel, when early voyagers were lost in the currents, eddies and storms of the Nebula. During the infamous Clone Wars, two opposing fleets completely vanished without trace.

These days however, the area is the subject of amusement by many more experienced pilots and considered only to be the stuff of folk lore. The familiar Rookie One is part of a scouting team which has flown into the area to investigate the reported disappearance of a number of Alliance craft. Rookie One responds to a distress call coming from a ship deep within the Nebula.

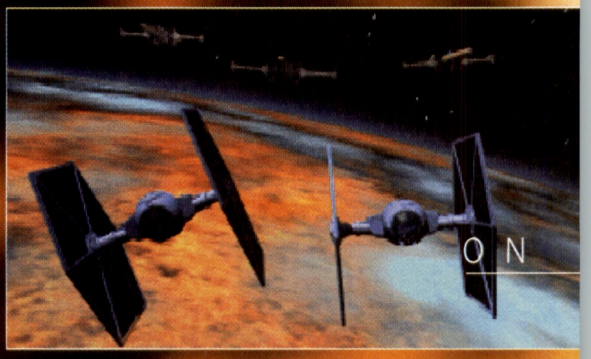
Upon arrival, Rookie One discovers that Imperial craft have beat him to the scene. The strategic relevance of the area being negligible, Rookie One's suspicions are immediately roused.

As Rebel Assault II unfolds, Rookie One discovers that the Empire are using the legend and mystery of this strange place to shroud a new and highly deadly weapon - and that the forces of the dark side are once again at work...

LucasArts Entertainment Company presents









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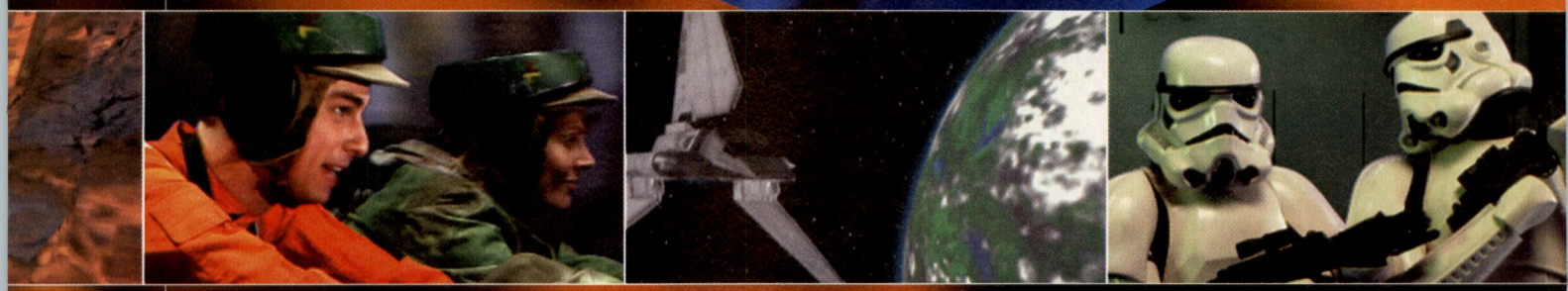
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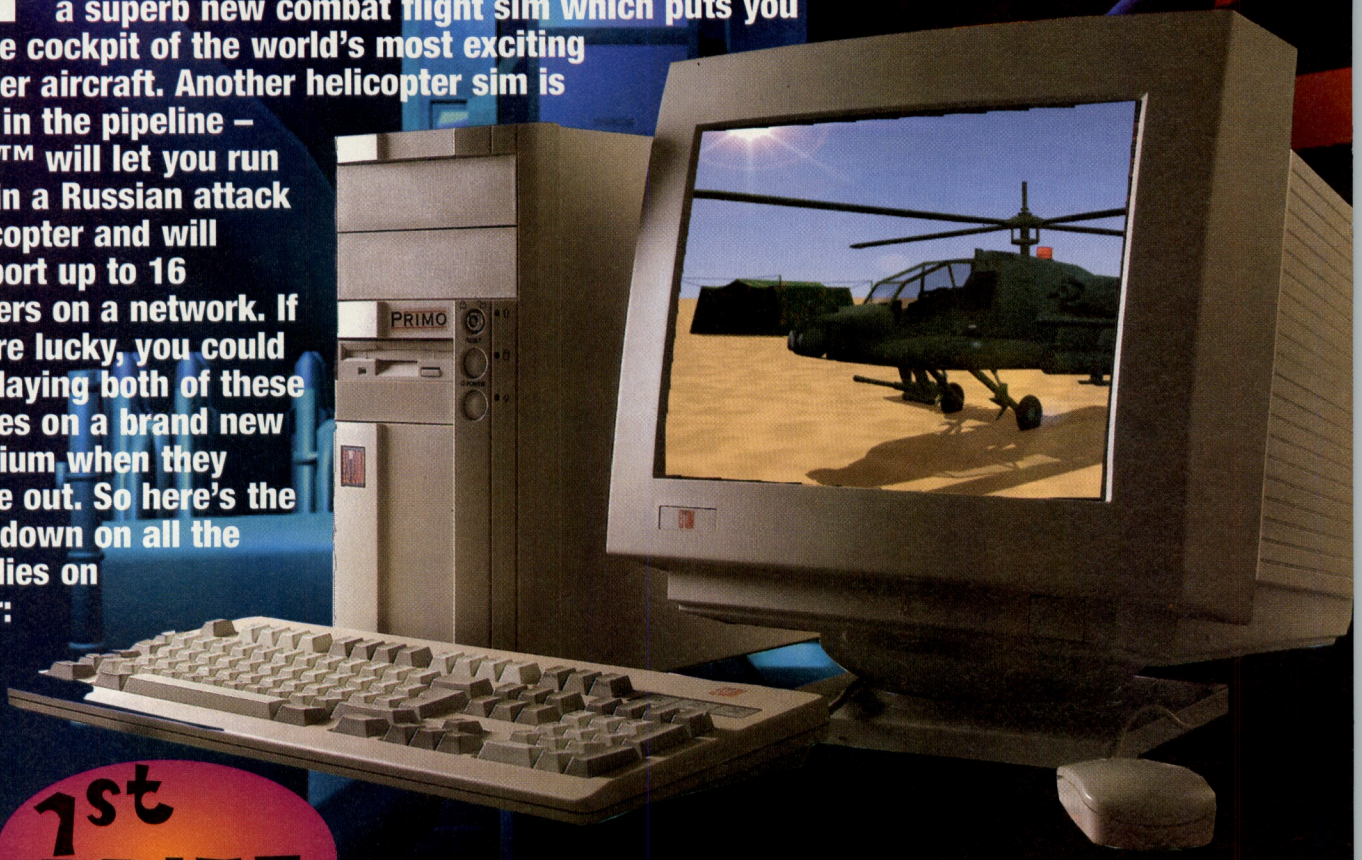


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Win a Pentium

Those wonderful people at Digital Integration have kindly given us a Pentium 75 PC for this month's fabber than fab *Apache Longbow* competition. They're gearing up to celebrate the forthcoming release of two new flight sims in March. And if that wasn't enough, the chaps at D.I are busy working hard on *F16 Fighting Falcon*™, a superb new combat flight sim which puts you in the cockpit of the world's most exciting fighter aircraft. Another helicopter sim is also in the pipeline – *Hind*™ will let you run riot in a Russian attack helicopter and will support up to 16 players on a network. If you're lucky, you could be playing both of these games on a brand new Pentium when they come out. So here's the low-down on all the goodies on offer:



1st PRIZE

A brand spanking new Pentium 75 multimedia dream machine with 8Mb RAM, a 500Mb hard drive, double-speed CD-ROM drive, 16-bit sound card and *Apache Longbow* game pack, comprising one copy of the game (which incidentally is the best helicopter sim around and scored a whopping 96 in our October issue), an *Apache Longbow* T-shirt, a lovely *Apache* mouse mat and an enormous *Apache* mug. The combined retail value of this little lot is £1500.







Multimedia kit!

THREE 2nd PRIZES

We've got three authentic flight jackets to give away, each worth about £120. Not only do they look incredibly sexy, they were all made by military clothes specialists in Tennessee, so you can wear them and pretend you're a proper pilot (if you want to, that is).



&

TEN 3rd PRIZES

We've get ten *Apache Longbow* game packs to give away to ten outrageously lucky people. Each one has a copy of the game, a T-shirt, mouse mat and mug.

Rules
All entries must be received by 1 February 1996 and no correspondence will be entered into.
The competition is not open to Dennis employees or Digital Integration employees or their relatives.

All you have to do to stand a chance of winning one of these fabulous prizes is complete the four questions below, fill in the tie-breaker, and hope that your name is one of the lucky ones pulled out of our special *PC Zone* competition hat.

1. Apache Longbow is a game from...
A. Sainsbury's B. Digital Integration C. John Major's bathroom

2. Hind™ is a helicopter game featuring a helicopter made in...
A. Japan B. Soviet Union C. Santa's Grotto

3. F16 Fighting Falcon™ is due out in...
A. A minute B. March next year C. March last year

4. The name of the helicopter featured in Apache Longbow is...
A. Reginald B. The Apache C. Concorde

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....**Postcode** .....

Date of Birth if under 18.....

Tie-breaker (to be completed in 30 words or less, BLOCK CAPITALS please)
I deserve to own a lovely new Pentium more than my next-door neighbour because...

.....

.....

.....

Send your answers and witty tie-breaker either on this form or on a postcard to:
Pentium Competition, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

APACHE LONGBOW

Digital Integration

You can't get a puncture or run over hedgehogs in hover cars. Why? 'Cos they don't have wheels. That's not quite what we were after when we asked Jeremy Wells for his first impression of Virgin's new hover car blaster, but he has got a point.

Zone Raiders

me Rollel

(Above) The intro and cut scenes are just top.

IF YOU'VE PLAYED WIPEOUT ON THE PC (OR PlayStation for that matter) you'll already have a pretty good idea how much fun cars with no wheels can be – unless you live in South London that is, in which case you'll just be pissed off that your car is propped up on bricks outside your house.

Cars without wheels are cool, not just because they don't get punctures or injure small, prickly creatures, but because they slide all over the place like Damon Hill when he's under pressure from old sausage breath. Cars equipped with guns, rockets and lasers are also a lot of fun, because instead of overtaking or gently nudging your opponent off the track (just like old sausage breath) you can blast them off the road and drive over their pathetic debris.

Luckily, the cars in *Zone Raiders* fulfil both criteria in that they slide all over the place, making U-turns and taking high banked corners at speed a joy, and they also come equipped with lots of different weapons, including a thing called a mortar of death. But, I feel I must add at this point, *Zone Raiders* is not a racing game. No, it's a sort of being chased all over the place, being pursued by, well, let's call them pursuers for now, over twisty-turny roads, searching for different things type of game. In a way it *is* a race, 'cos you're always being bloody chased by someone, but it's not really – you're less of a Nigel Mansell and more of a Dr Richard Kimble on wheels (or not, as is the case) and hopefully you've shaved your beard off.

So why? Why? Why?

Well, *Zone Raiders* is set in the future after a nuclear war (which is easy enough to work out because the cars don't have any wheels and there aren't any country lanes to get stuck down), and most of the earth is uninhabitable. The surviving residents have banded together and formed the Emergency Containment Organisation (ECO) which basically consists of healthy beings (ie those not affected by the fall out) and shacked up in what's left of the cities.

Those people with their eyes too close together and two heads (the Raiders) have been banished to the wastelands and prohibited from entering the cities for fear of contamination. As a Raider you must enter the Zones, retrieve, destroy or activate various items and return to the relative safety of the barren wasteland, your ultimate goal being to reach the Freezone (which is the only part of the planet unaffected by the fall out) where everything's jolly, people's faces don't fall off, babies don't glow luminously in the dark, and they all live happily ever after. C'est tres original, n'est pas?

So what? What? What?

Well, apart from cool hover cars, mass death and destruction, *Zone Raiders* features 15 different tracks/missions/country lanes and so on to keep you occupied, day and night-time driving, the option of SVGA or just plain normal texture-mapped graphics, and a multi-player network facility for four players.

But you can forget all that for the moment, because all you really need to know is that it's bloody fast (although not in hi-res mode at present – "because it hasn't been optimised yet"), and the sensation of speed is second only to *Wipeout* and that skiing game you get in the arcades. As Keanu Reeves supposedly once said, "Get ready for rush hour!" Z

Product details

Developer: Orbital
Publisher: VIE
Telephone: 0171-368 2255
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: Christmas 95

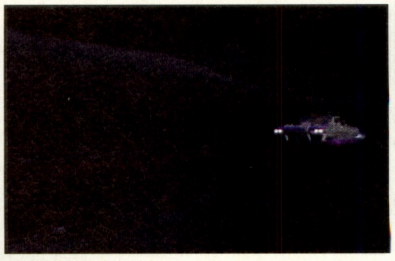
(Bottom row, left) The game sports the usual in and out of car views.

(Bottom row, centre) The vehicles are based on ancient cars. They don't have wheels, but they do have grenade launchers and mortars of death.

(Bottom row, right) Fifteen tracks and cars that handle like you imagine hover cars would – move over *Quarantine*, your days are well and truly numbered.







THE WORD 'TAXI' MAY BE YOUR LAST

ROAD WARRIOR

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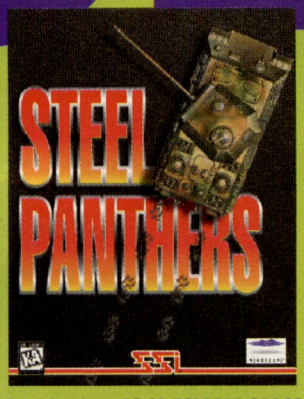
...and on the seventh day,

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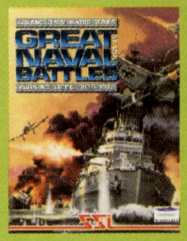
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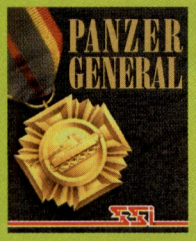
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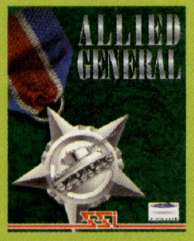
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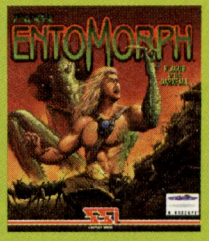
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MICROPROSE REALISES THAT THERE ARE A LOT OF UGLY people in the world and has decided to take the initiative to do something about it. As luck would have it, it's also about to release the rather super *Top Gun* combat flight sim, which casts you (yep, you) in the role of cheeky chappie and all round good-looking rich bloke Tom Cruise (and let's face it, this bloke could have more chicks than Bernard Matthews if he wanted).

Now, MicroProse isn't offering you the chance to get all fruity with Kelly McGillis (or Tom Cruise for that matter), but it *is* giving away some rather cool 'good-looking bloke/girlie' apparel that will help you be a hit with the opposite sex – namely a couple of tremendously cool flight jackets and four pairs of 'I know it's dark, but I'm so damn hip' Rayban shades – which when applied will instantly turn you into a lurve magnet. And as if that wasn't enough it's giving away enough copies of the rather top *Gold* packs to sink an extremely large lilo.

So what do you have to do to look like Tom or Kelly? It's so incredbily easy – simply answer the incredibly taxing questions below, send in the coupon and you will automatically be entered into our prize draw. The first nine names out of the *PC Zone* underwear drawer will then be showered with prizes and lurve.

I want to look like a cool combat pilot and turn myself into a lurve object, but first I must answer these really difficult questions:

1. Tom Cruise is married to:

○ Mimi Rogers ○ Mrs Cruise ○ Nicole Kidman

2. How tall is Tom Cruise?

○ Really tiny ○ Really short
○ I don't know, but he's no giant

3. Top Gun is a film about... ?

○ A really cool firearm ○ Spoons
○ Cocky American combat pilots

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Age (If under 18): .....

Send your entries to PC Zone, Top Gun Compo, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ.
All usual rules and restrictions apply.
Closing date 15 January, 1996

Check out these wonderful prizes!

2 ugly winners will receive:

- An incredibly cool flying jacket, just like Tom's
- A pair of 'so damn hip they're hot' Raybans, just like Tom's
- Copies of *Falcon Gold*, *Pacific Air War Gold* and *Fleet Defender Gold*

2 ugly runners-up will receive:

- A pair of 'so damn hip they're hot' Raybans, just like Tom's
- Copies of *Falcon Gold*, *Pacific Air War Gold* and *Fleet Defender Gold*

5 ugly not-quite-losers will receive:

- Copies of *Falcon Gold*, *Pacific Air War Gold* and *Fleet Defender Gold*





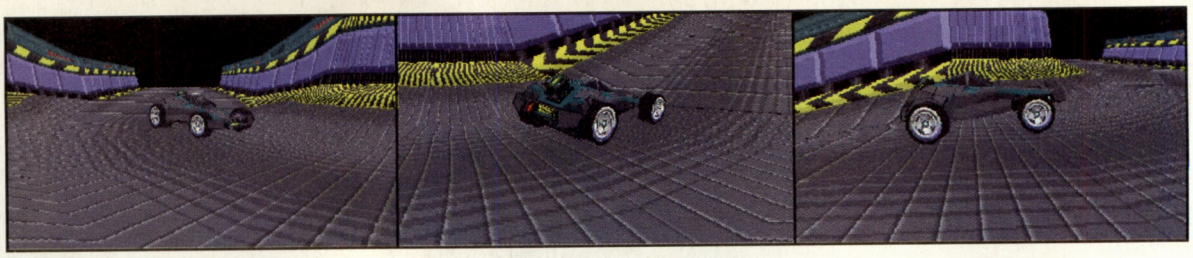


WIN

Top Gun Competition

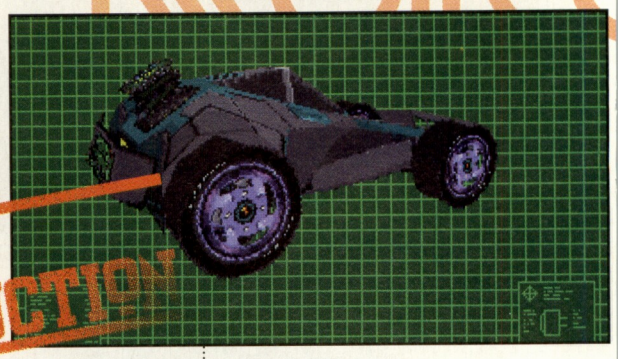
Top Gun © 1986 Paramount Pictures Corp.

The PC is being inundated with utterly fab racing games, and *Ram Racer* is another one getting ready to jump on the bandwagon. "Hooray!" shouts Chris Anderson.



Ram Racer





IN PRODUCTION

MICROPROSE IS WORKING ON A NEW arcade racing game which looks like it could pose a challenge to *Need For Speed* and *Screamer* on the PC. *Ram Racer* is a "hard, fast and energetic" driving game set in the near future which puts you behind the wheel of some suitably flash autos, and then lets you go and wreck them completely over 13 tracks. Each venue stages three different races, which means an astonishing total of 39 tracks to play with.

Arc Developments, creator of the game, achieved this impressive feat by introducing a new track creation tool called Dynamic Track System. What DTS effectively does is alter the track while you're driving on it. So, with 13 tracks to play with, and three DTS variants for each one, you end up with 39 tracks.

This may sound as though each venue has one track which changes a little for the other two, but nothing could be further from the truth – DTS can wildly transform a track by affecting the track surface, placing sliding and rising blocks in awkward places (or ramps and jumps on the track), and in general making the thing a complete nightmare to drive around on.

Additionally, it can further ruin your life by playing dirty – in other words by placing horrendous hazards on the tracks at random, such as spikes (bye bye tyres!), bumpers, catapults, oil spills, fire, pits and all sorts of other stuff.

Power-ups in arcade game shock

However, almost by way of apology for all these nasty (but fun) surprises, the designers have included lots of power-ups. There are two types: instant ones, which take effect immediately you pick them up, and timed ones, which last for a set duration. Instant power-ups do nice things like perform minor or major repairs to your car, give you extra fuel, and teleport you round the tracks. Timed power-ups are more of a mixed bag, and are not always useful – it depends on what you pick up. For example, one of these might give you dramatically improved acceleration, or then again it might turn your super-fast futuristic auto into the slowest vehicle on the track. They can also make your car invulnerable for a short time, give you an improved ram plate, super thrusts, or give you super tyres or (if you're unlucky) crap slippery ones.

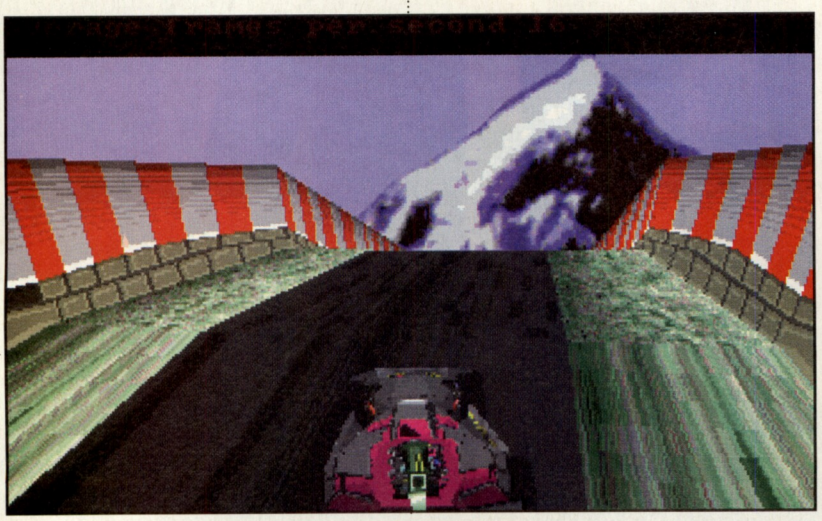
(Above) *Ram Racer's* cars all look a bit like seriously suped-up dune buggy things.

There are 15 other drivers to compete against, all of which have their own personalities and colour portraits, and there will be a variety of cars to choose from; exactly how many has not yet been decided upon, but apparently Arc is promising a reasonable number of alternatives. Whatever car you go for, you will be able to 'personalise' it by spraying it with a selection of 32 colours, badging it, and generally making it look utterly awful to everyone in the whole world except you.

Option-tastic

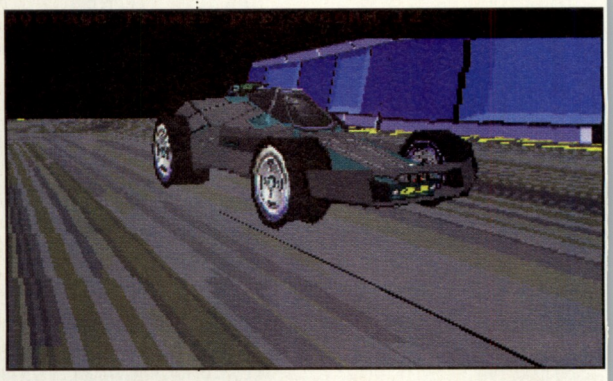
The list of features in *Ram Racer* is almost endless. There are a total of six different views of the action: three first-person, and three third-person. You can view the cars' HUD from any of these, so you can always see how much fuel you've got and how much damage you've suffered (and by the sound of things, you'll probably need to keep your eye on this one all the time).

You can repair your car between and during races by entering the Auto Shop



(Below left) The texture-mapped polygon backgrounds all look superb – but you'll need a pretty mighty Pentium to get the thing moving smoothly.

(Below) Looks rather cool really, doesn't it?





(Above) The views in the demo version we saw of the game allowed you to see your car from just about anywhere. Let's hope the final game will let you have as much freedom.

Product details

Developer: Arc Development
Publisher: MicroProse
Telephone: 01454 326532
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: March 96

screen. This is just as well, seeing as the cars take damage in four different areas, which can either leave your vehicle slightly damaged, pretty much wrecked, or even destroyed. The game also includes a championship mode, which is played out over all the venues; here you accumulate cash which you can then spend on improving your car.

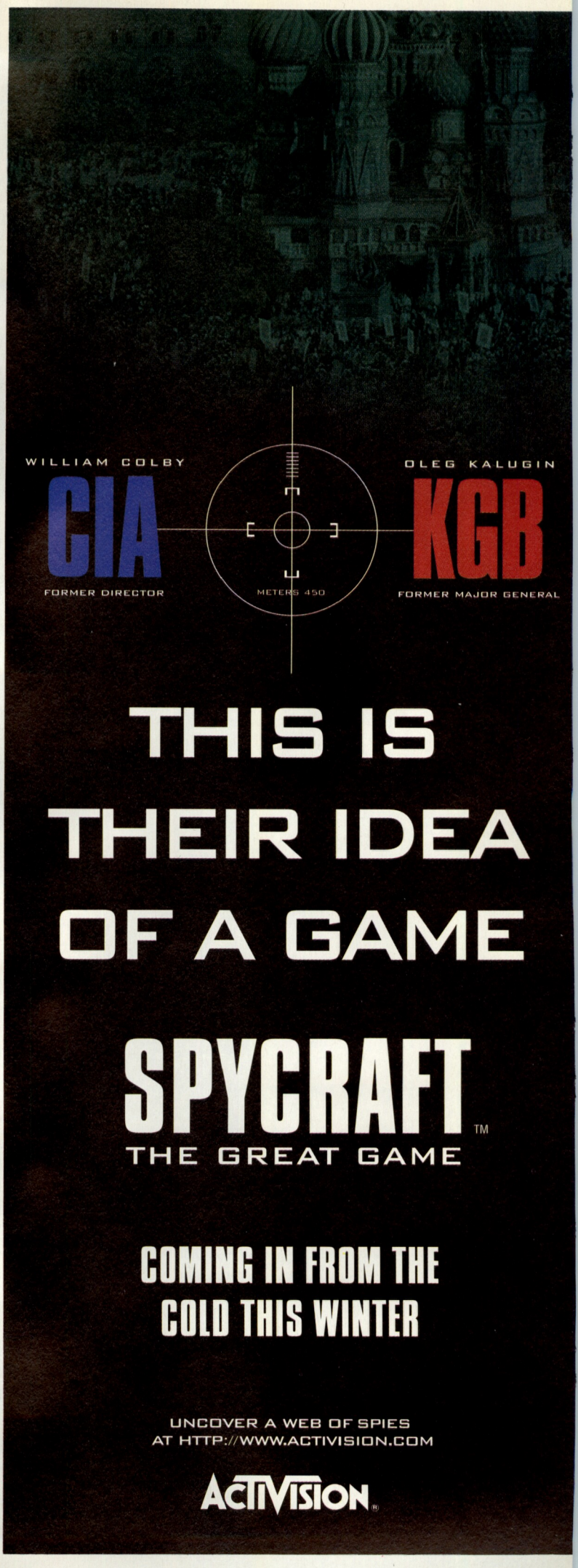
To add even more variety to the game, the weather conditions vary from track to track. You may find yourself driving around in the sun one minute, and sliding all over the place in the snow the next. As if all this wasn't enough, you can watch replays of all the races and point out to your friends the interesting bit where you stormed ahead at the last minute, leaving the opposition behind in a trail of dust.

It really seems as if Arc has thought of just about everything for *Ram Racer*, and the graphics look gorgeous to boot. We'll give you a full report when it comes out in March.



(Below) The wheels spin, the background whizzes by smoothly and the texture maps look, er, like quite cool texture maps.



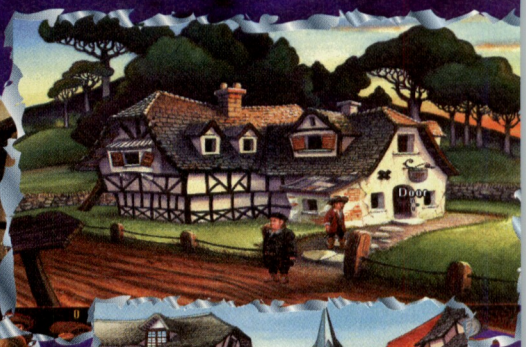


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Touché

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We did try and stop Jeremy Wells from making some stupid irreverent joke about Levis and Wranglers, and this time we actually managed to succeed.

Gene Wars

IN PRODUCTION

Product details

Developer: Bullfrog
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Telephone: 01753 549442
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: January

WHEN BULLFROG RUNS OUT OF ideas the world will be a truly sad and empty place. The birds will stop singing, flowers will stop flowering and you'll no longer hear the innocent laughter of children playing. It will probably rain every day and the world will eventually destroy itself through boredom. Let's hope and pray Bullfrog eats its greens and keeps taking mildly hallucinogenic drugs (er, sniffing strong black marker pens and new plastic footballs, that is) and keeps coming up with stunningly original ideas for new games. Because if it doesn't, we're in trouble.

Thankfully, if its latest creation (no pun intended) is anything to go by, we can all heave a sigh of relief and safely assume that Peter Molyneux and his crew walk around with a black marker up each nostril, clutching 99p footballs and chewing broad beans and brussel sprouts. You see, *Gene Wars* is another spectacularly original and appealing game that you want to play now and have in your games drawer forever. Not only does it look quite gorge, but the story, the plot, the idea – call it what you will (or all three if you like) is quite top: in other words, it's not just another real-time *Command & Conquer* clone, it's a totally original war and resource management sim – with animals.

Let me explain

So what's the gig? Well, like all the very best ideas, *Gene Wars* is set thousands of years into the future. A band of space travellers (best described as futuristic hippies come gypsies, and thankfully not just another load of Australian dropouts in a clapped-out VW camper van looking for work) inadvertently end up in a hitherto unexplored corner of our galaxy. These space travellers just happen to come from a civilisation which is advanced and peace-loving (so they're definitely not Australians at all) and are therefore a little surprised and saddened (melancholy even) to find that planet after planet has been destroyed by continual war and its after effects.

As they travel deeper into this star system they come to the conclusion that these decimated, decaying worlds are the result of years of conflict that still continues between four different races, who are battling away against each other for supremacy, and are intent on destroying the other three at all costs.

Being such super-hip peace-loving space dudes, completely dedicated to the pursuit of peace, and also well 'ard to boot, the space travellers disarm all four warring factions and demand they start to atone for the devastation they have wrought, by cleaning up the planets they have destroyed and then working to rebuild the shattered worlds into nice, clean and healthy habitable planets once more. In other words, "Stop fighting with your brothers and sisters and go and tidy your room!" Slap! Slap! Spank! Spank!

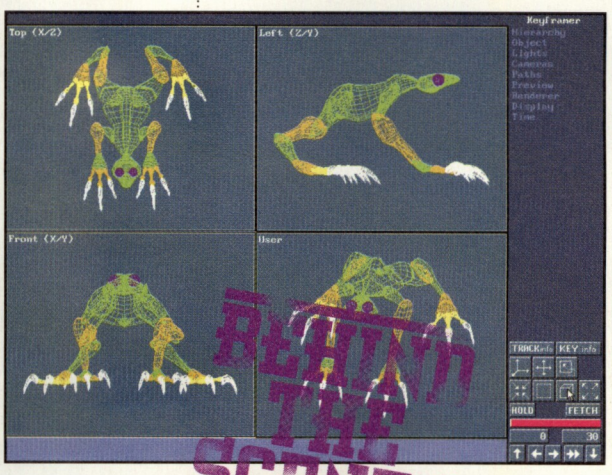
Despite hating each other intensely, all four races agree that they really should do exactly what these weird space dudes want or they're going to get their collective arses kicked, so they agree to live side by side in perfect harmony. To ensure that this happens, all access to weaponry is removed and all four of the belligerent parties are left with the means to create both plant and animal life, which they must genetically engineer and then introduce to the damaged environments in an attempt to restore some kind of natural balance to the war torn planets.

On the surface at least, all four races now co-exist, peacefully trying their



(Above) Depending on the environment, you can get all sorts of weird and wonderful creatures to do your dirty work for you.





(Left) All the creatures in the game were initially designed using 3D Studio. These initial meshes are then transferred to the gaming environment where they are altered according to the measurements of Goop that you apply.

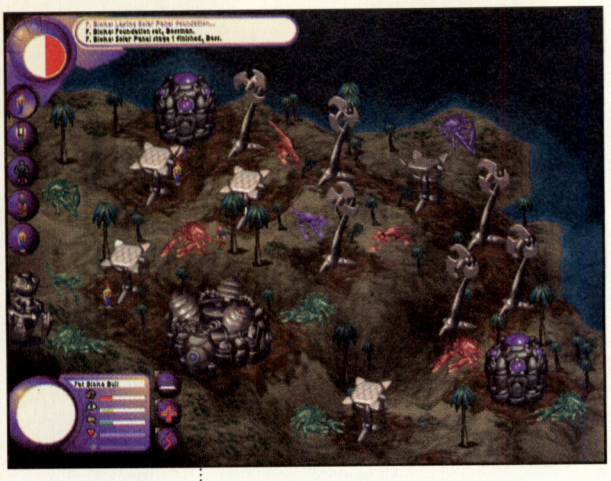
BEHIND THE SCENES

»

(Right) Although you aren't allowed to make anything that could be used as a weapon, you are allowed to make particularly large and nasty monsties with which to attack the bad guys. Take these huge, mutant, killer, ninja crabs for example. Nasty.

(Far right) The creatures aren't just used for attacking though. Their primary role is to help you build the colony.





best to re-establish equilibrium; beneath the smiles and tugging of forelocks, however, they still loathe each other. Old enmities simply cannot be wiped out overnight and deep down each race is still determined to destroy the other three. With no weapons available, the only option is to invent new ones, but if it becomes apparent what you're doing, and the Ethereals or the other three races realise what's going on, you'll be for it big time. So no fighting or violence of any kind, is that clear?

But I thought you said this was a war game?

Well, being just a bit sneaky and all, you decide to biologically engineer killer creatures to dispatch all your enemies for you (I presume that by this point you've realised that you must opt to play one of the four warring races). Should the peace keepers see or hear of it, you can always claim that these killer creatures were just an unforeseen aberration, a genetic freak of nature that went out of control. How were you to know that the cutesy, cuddly, fluffy bunny you created would morph into a rabid dinosaur when you mixed in a helping of armadillo and bumble bee? Get the picture?

The only problem is, the other three factions have got similarly sneaky and determined minds, and so they too are busily creating their own brand of killer creatures to use against you – the basts! So it's still war, but this time it's underhand and downright sneaky, though of course, no less deadly. Instead of guns, bombs and lasers on the battlefield, it's killer mutant creatures in the jungle, in the valleys, in the lakes and on the beaches – only the faction that creates the sneakiest and most deadly creatures will survive, and it's up to you to see that your lot come out on top. War without weapons. Who'd have thought it?

But I want details, details!

I know, but the plot/storyline is pretty important, otherwise it just doesn't make sense. But I'll elaborate. Basically, your task is to genetically create certain creatures and plants (ie any kind of living matter) and assign them to certain tasks. You do this by mixing different kinds of goop (the genetic raw material) with various strains or characteristics of other animals: for example, you might throw in a dash of agility and a sprinkling of aggression and create a long-legged forager.

You then might want to add this to something you made earlier (in true *Blue Peter* fashion) and come up with an amphibian tree climber, with long pointy talons and poisonous farts (or something) that you can use to go and create merry hell and mayhem in your opponents' stronghold. In fact, the limit to what you can come up with really is virtually endless, because you can cross reference whatever you've made with just about everything else.

However, before you get carried away, you haven't got a completely free reign as each planet contains different terrains and environments and you'll have to develop different creatures with certain characteristics to perform in the specific environments accordingly: ie creatures with big feet so that they don't sink in the snow or sand for desert or snow covered landscapes, webbed feet for underwater creatures, long-toed creatures for tree climbers and so on, or they won't perform for you.

It might sound complicated, but it's actually a lot of fun creating biological killing machines and sneaky, silent, soft-footed assassins. It's not all fisticuffs though, you'll also need to create scavengers and miners to keep you in resources, heavyweight killer guards to protect your base and speedy creatures to carry out patrols and recce missions.

As you'd expect with a game of this ilk, there's a multi-player link-up facility which allows up to four players to play as each of the warring races and compete against each other for total supremacy. However, if you're playing against the computer, expect a hard time. Bullfrog has been working a lot of overtime to get the AI up to scratch, and has eventually come up with a routine that actually learns how you play and comes up with its own tactics to counteract what you're doing and wipe you off the face of the planet.

And that's it, that's really all you need to know about *Gene Wars*, except that it's already looking totally fab and you should do everything you can to make sure you get your hands on a copy as soon as possible, which if all goes well will probably be at the beginning of next year. Oh, and keep sending Bullfrog any spare black marker pens, plastic footballs and brussel sprouts, or we're all doomed. Z



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***Cyberia's* back, and it looks even more flash than it did the first time round. Chris Anderson gets suitably excited.**





Resurrection: Cyberia 2

NOW THERE'S A STRANGE THING! *Cyberia* was pretty good when it was released, but *BioForge* has since taken the PC world by storm and made it look somewhat dull in comparison. Now *Resurrection*, the sequel to *Cyberia*, is about to be released, with adventure bits that look similar to *BioForge*. Funny that. Of course this could be cause for celebration if the makers of *Resurrection* succeed in creating a game to seriously compete with the totally awesome *BioForge*.

However, Derek McLeish, President and CEO of Xatrix (the development team behind the game) is not looking over his shoulder at past releases, but instead is sensibly preparing for the forthcoming onslaught of *Cyberia* lookalikes. He seems to think they've got things more or less in hand. He explains: "We've employed even better cutting edge technology to make *Resurrection* the best new game of its type for Christmas. While other publishers are eagerly planning to release *Cyberia*-like products, we've already raised the bar that much higher with *Resurrection*." Brave words and, from the demo we saw in the office, this is no idle boast.

Motion capture alert

Resurrection has a brand new combat engine which gives players much more involvement in the arcade sections. Also, there's all-new hand-to-hand combat, so you get to biff people as well as shoot at them, which is quite smart. The adventure sections have been made much more realistic, too. This is mainly down to Xatrix making a late entry into the 'Our motion capture technology is newer and better than anyone else's' competition, which all the software houses seem to be competing in.

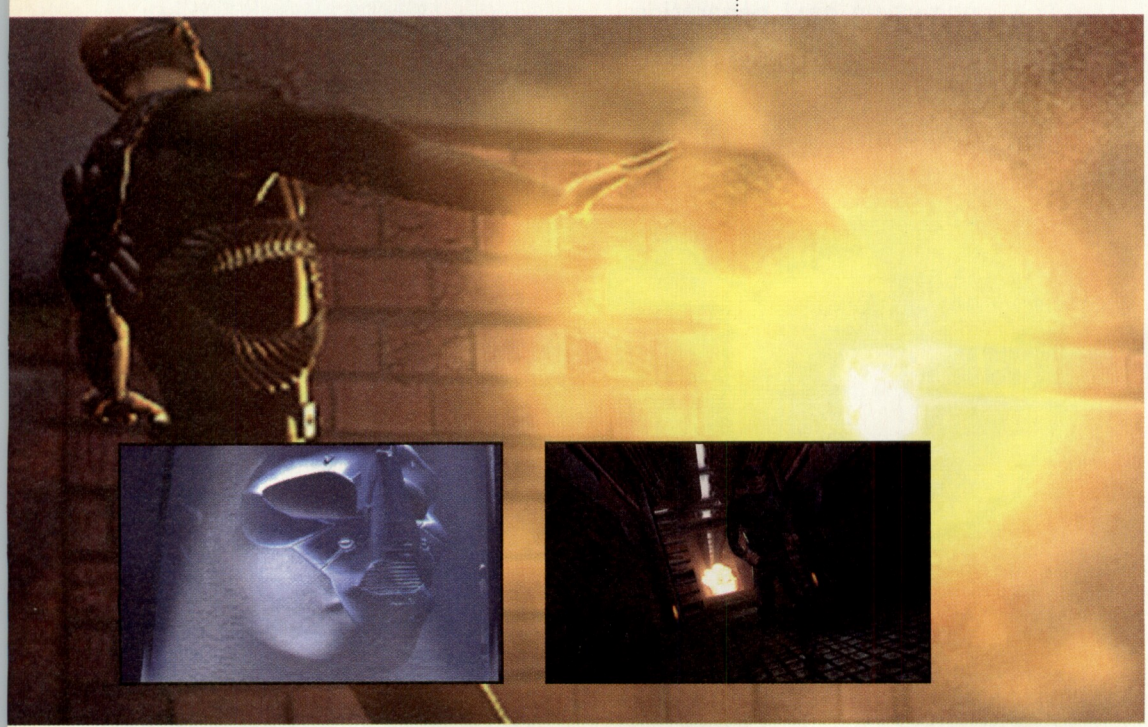


Product details

Developer: Xatrix
Publisher: Virgin Interactive Games
Telephone: 0171-368 2255
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

However, new motion capture technology or not, *Resurrection* looks the absolute business. The gorgeous backgrounds for the shoot 'em up scenes that were so jaw-droppingly beautiful in the first game look even better in the second one. The adventure sections have been given a major overhaul too: you now have complete control over your character, as opposed to simply pressing an arrow key and watching him wander about all by himself. New hot zones on the screen give you more interaction with the objects in your environment, and you have greater control over the difficulty levels (a good move – some of the action scenes in the original game were nigh on impossible, though admittedly this was partially down to a dodgy control system). To ensure lasting playability, it now has enemies that appear randomly in every new game, so it will seem different every time you play it.

We can't say whether or not all these new features and aesthetic tweaks will turn *Resurrection* into a *BioForge*-beater until we get our hands on the finished product. Either way, we've been assured it will be ready for review in time for the next issue of *PC Zone*. Stay tuned. Z



(Above and below) *Resurrection* uses an advanced graphics engine to make the game look even more spectacular than its predecessor *Cyberia*.

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"Never was so much owed by so many to so few." Winston Churchill's famous speech heralded the victorious defeat of the enemy.

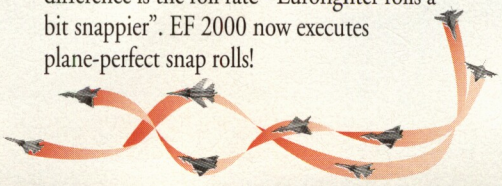
We had fighter planes in abundance, fuel, arms... everything necessary to meet the enemy on equal terms - yet we suffered from a chronic shortage of trained pilots.

It must never happen again.

And it won't.

Now you can experience, in ball-tingling, scrotum-tightening accuracy (sorry, ladies) exactly what it's like to fly the best fighter plane in the world - with the greatest PC flight sim in the world.

A Eurofighter test pilot who recently flew the sim was wildly impressed: "The only difference is the roll rate - Eurofighter rolls a bit snappier". EF 2000 now executes plane-perfect snap rolls!



The flight options are enormous.

Stooge around and just delight in the fluidity of the graphics and the beautiful map-accurate 4 million square kilometres o scenery. Or fly in-depth missions with breathtaking accuracy.

The AI controlled WarGen system reproduces a realistic combat environment, filling the skies with thousands of aircraft at any one time.

Or if you can't wait for some action, go to 'Quick Combat' (not for the faint-hearted!)

The accompanying flight manual is a treasure in its own right - giving an insigh

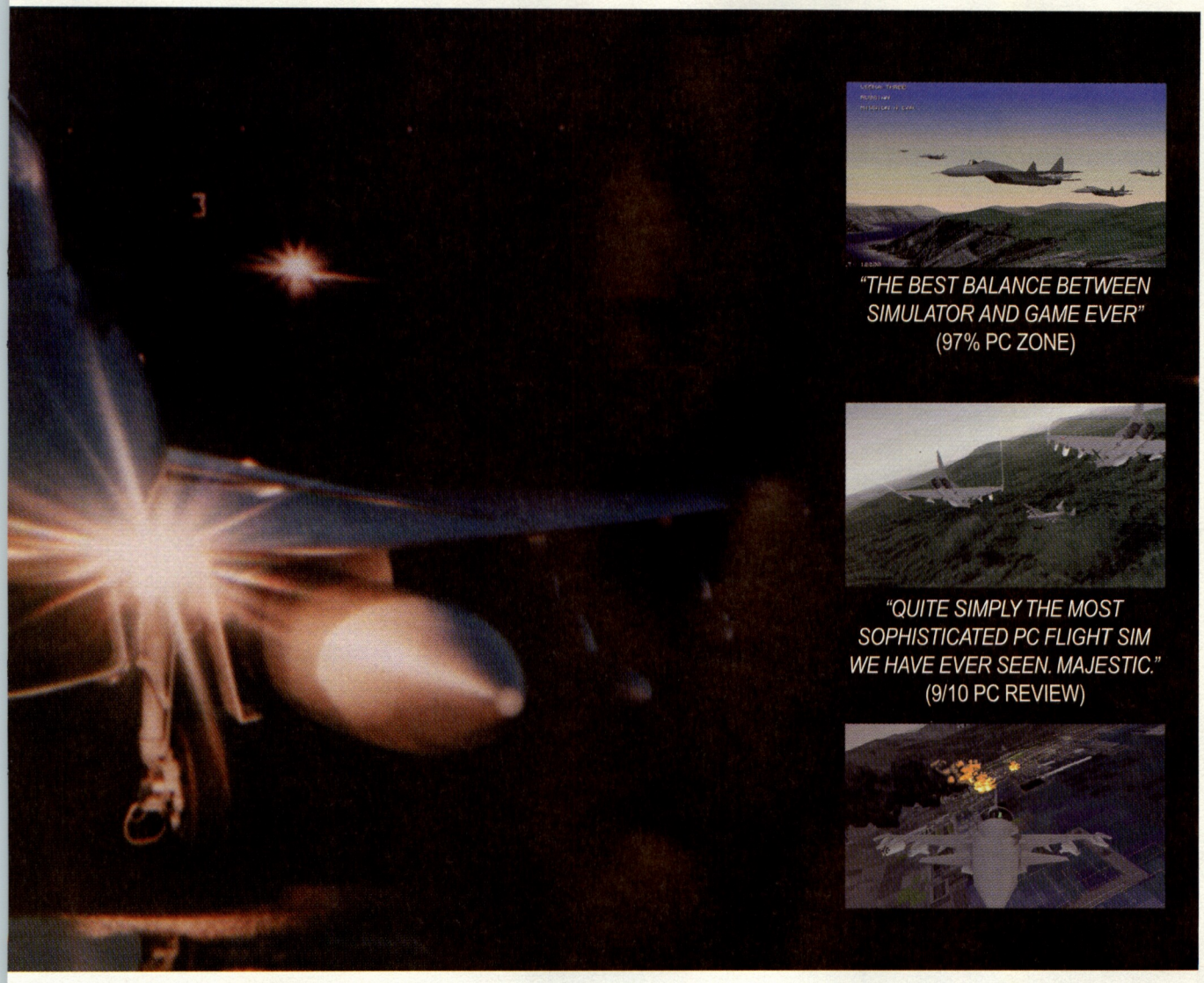
TFX MILITARY

Officially the world's greatest

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its darkest hour.
again."

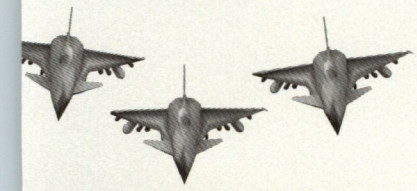
DID™
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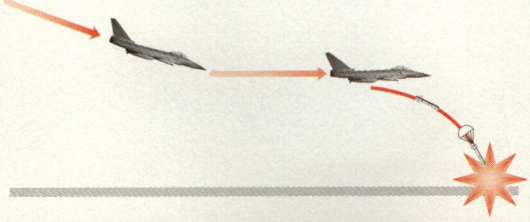
"THE BEST BALANCE BETWEEN SIMULATOR AND GAME EVER"
(97% PC ZONE)

"QUITE SIMPLY THE MOST SOPHISTICATED PC FLIGHT SIM WE HAVE EVER SEEN. MAJESTIC."
(9/10 PC REVIEW)

to how, why and where the Eurofighter as developed. Every one of the urofighter's amazing attack, flight and efensive systems are faithfully simulated ith incredible accuracy.



Against the dreaded SU-35 - the best plane the enemy have - you have a slight combat edge, if you fly to your fullest ability. Don't and you're dead meat. SU27s, MiGs, transporters - over 30 different allied and enemy planes - fly in total realism. Ground targets abound - SAMs, gun emplacements, silos, ports, ships, troops, airfields - it's just too much.



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Fly it, if you dare.



EF 2000

ith networking capability for up to 8 lots, wingmen at your command, mid-air fuelling, plus accurate plane and weapons erformance, you're all set to take on and efeat the enemy.

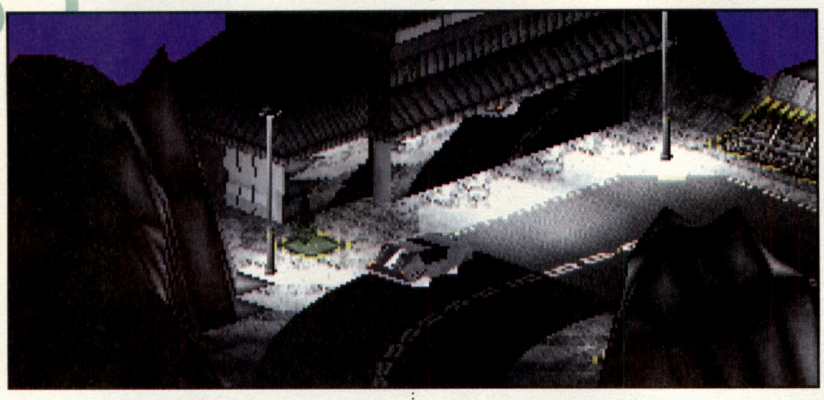
PC Combat flight sim.

ocean

el: 0161 832 6633, Fax:0161 834 0650. e-mail: ef2000@did.com.

***Syndicate* is widely regarded as one of Bullfrog's finest moments. John Davison takes a good look at the sequel.**

Syndicate Wars





(Above & above left) The graphics engine for *Syndicate Wars* has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the first game. The new view is a fully rotatable 3D polygon-based thing and it looks fantastic.

Product details

Developer: Bullfrog

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: March 96

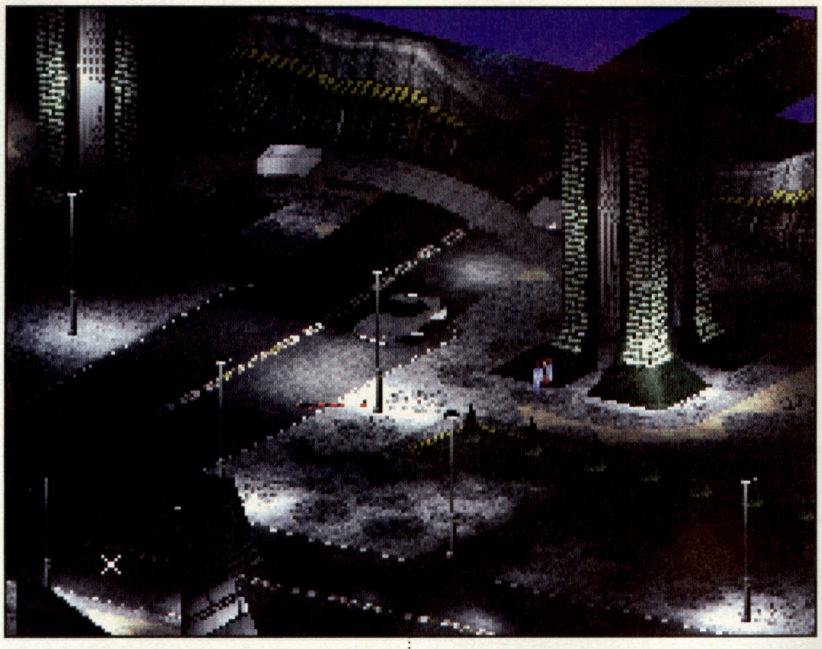
TO SAY THAT THE ORIGINAL SYNDICATE was well received would really be something of an understatement. *PC Zone* loved the thing so much that our coverline on issue five actually read (and I quote): "Totally amoral, ultra violent and more fun than sex – it's *Syndicate*." Okay, at that point we were obviously yet to discover the finer pleasures of partaking in certain horizontal activities, but now that we know all about that sort of thing (and we do, you know) we still think it's ace. *Syndicate* remains one of the few titles that you can honestly say is a god among games. And there aren't many – *Command & Conquer* qualifies, as does *UFO: Enemy Unknown*, and er, probably *Formula One Grand Prix* – but they really are very few and far between.

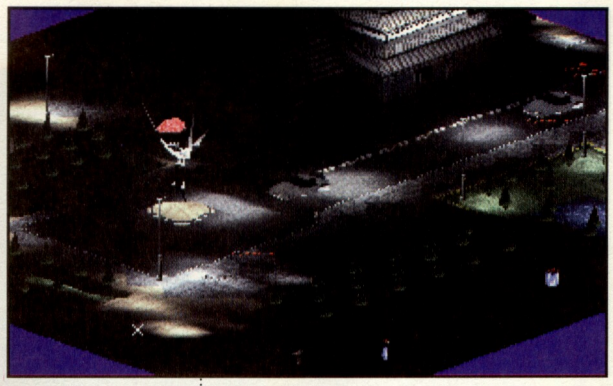
After the immense success of *Syndicate* and the resulting conversions which appeared on virtually every format known to man, it was inevitable that we'd see a sequel. And we did, very quickly in fact – in the shape of *American Revolt*, which actually turned out to be a data disk. And how would we describe it? Bloody hard. Totally and utterly, stupidly, ridiculously and inhumanly bloody hard. But people played it, and they beat it. And then things went quiet for a bit.

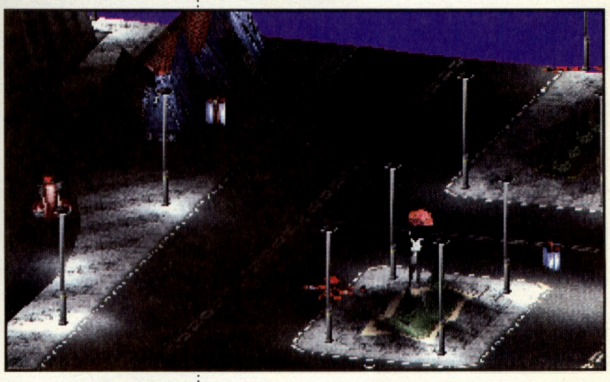
Late last year, the *Syndicate* hype machine starting whirring and buzzing yet again. Rumours abounded that there was a 'proper' sequel on the way and we all got very excited and started jumping up and down a



IN PRODUCTION







(Top left) The light-sourced backdrops really are quite spectacular. Most of the cityscapes are night-time features and the use of spot lighting effects is extremely atmospheric.

lot. But this soon stopped when we heard two horrifying rumours:
1) That the game was being developed exclusively for the PlayStation, and
2) That it was going to be more of an action game as opposed to a point-and-click strategy/action thing.

To say that we (like much of the PC gamesplaying community), wept would be yet another understatement.

The thing is though, the rumours were partly true. The original intention was for the thing to be a PlayStation-only product and to be honest, it is shaping up to be a more 'action' based thing. Worry not though, the PC version is now nearing completion and it manages to capture the best of both worlds – strategy and action.

New and improved

The idea behind the game is that things have been trundling along quite nicely since the American Revolt. Eurocorp is now the company that controls everything, and the world population can sleep easy in their beds knowing that big brother *is* watching and if they step out of line they *will* get their heads blown off. Hooray for totalitarianism, eh? Anyway, no one would be able to see if there were any problems because Eurocorp is still using the Persudatron to ensure that everyone stays placid.

Obviously this situation wouldn't make much of a scenario for a game, especially when you consider that you are the head honcho of Eurocorp. So, to add a bit of zing you soon learn that a number of resistance groups are now forming around the world and that the whole thing is falling to pieces. By the third or fourth mission everything goes to hell in a hand basket and, before you know it, there's complete chaos. Hence the ensuing mission structure where you rebuild everything and wipe out anything that moves (or doesn't).

So what's different this time, then? Well, it's all a bit more complicated. For a start you have the option to represent Eurocorp with two different factions of warriors. You can choose to either tow the company line and go with the trench-coated foot soldier types or you can join the church and make use of a bunch of religious maniacs who go around zapping people with weaponry that makes them look magical. Obviously, depending on which faction you go with, the structure of the gameplay alters accordingly. Whereas the first game featured extremely linear gameplay where you simply completed one mission after the other – each with a specific goal – this time you are simply set goals. There are 30 cities around the globe that you can travel to and many of the missions could be completed in any of a number of these. For example, you may receive a brief that simply says "go and get some dosh" so you can go anywhere in the world and blow up a bank, if that's the way you think you should go about this sort of thing. »

A change in strategy

While the game structure in *Syndicate* Wars is far more complex than the original, the methods that you employ have actually been simplified somewhat. For example, in *Syndicate* there was a considerable amount of resource management with respect to your agents. You had to employ scientists to develop new styles of weapon as well as research the possibilities of upgrading the armour and bionics of your chaps. *Syndicate Wars* simplifies this by allowing you to just channel money into 'research'. Then, by kidnapping scientists from around the globe and beating them up a bit, you can convince them to develop new and wonderful 'things' for you.

Aside from this, *Syndicate Wars* has also eradicated the need for those bar graph things that appeared at the top of the screen to affect the agents' adrenaline and intelligence etc. Now all that you have to do is place your agents (or religious dudes) into specific 'modes'. For example, you can tell them to guard an object or hunt for something, or alternatively you can just stick them in berserker mode, give them a big gun and watch the ensuing carnage.

Men in coats

BEHIND THE SCENES

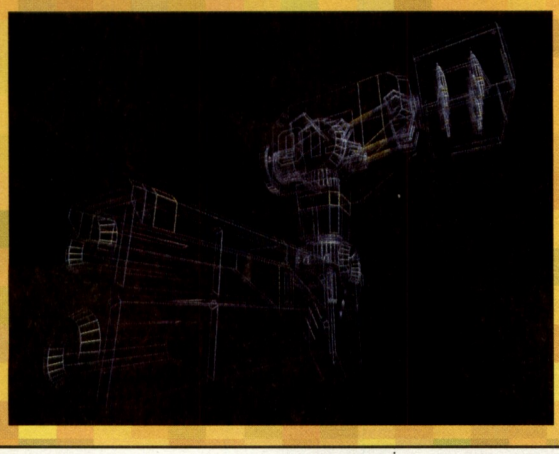
Here we have the team responsible for bringing us *Syndicate Wars*, resplendent in their lovely long trench-coats. Apparently this was shot outside the bus station in Aldershot. Not so glamourous now, eh?

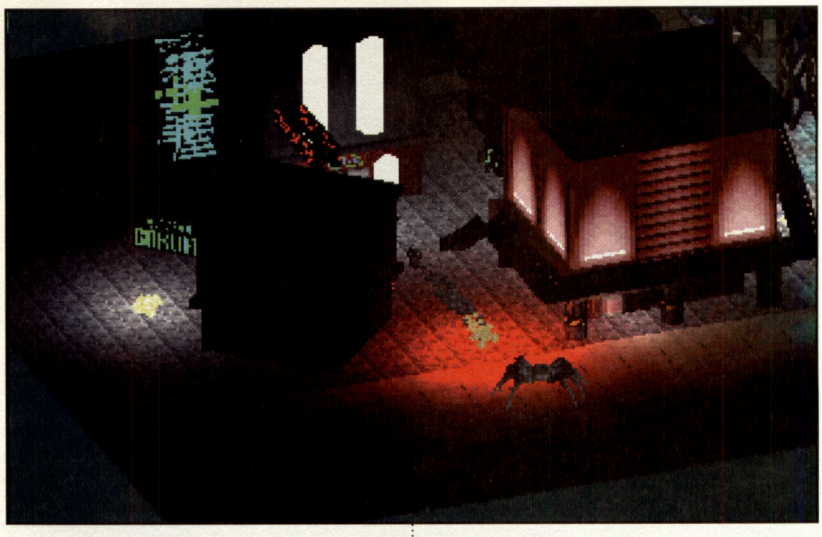
(Left to right) Ian Shaw (Support Programmer), Sean Masterson (Level Designer), Russell Shaw (Sound and Music), Mike Diskett (Project Leader), Peter Molyneux (Producer), Mike Man (Lead Artist).



The making of a robot

The strange contraptions that wander around the city were first created in 3D Studio as a 'mesh' before being transformed into a texture-mapped, polygon-based object which can be moved around the gaming environment. The image below is the weapons system that has been designed for one of the police robots that roams around some of the cities. Objects are drawn in so much detail so that they can be viewed from a distance or up close.





« Pretty boy

It's not just the gameplay that's been given a serious kick up the backside though. The graphics engine has been enhanced seriously, and while the game still manages to capture the atmosphere of the first game – it's totally different.

For a start the old scrolling isometric viewpoint has gone. In its place we now have a fully 360 degree rotatable landscape that can be easily manipulated using the mouse. You can zoom in and out of the action and tilt things up and down as well. Basically if you want to see any part of the city you can just twiddle the 'virtual camera' (for want of a better name) and look at things from anywhere. Cool. Gone are the days of the original *Syndicate* where you could hide behind a building with a very large gun in multi-player mode and no one would know you were there.

As well as all of this 3D twiddling around, we now also have a fully light-sourced, texture-mapped polygon-based environment. Each city is made up of real-looking, solid polygon buildings and structures and all of them look different depending on which city you are in. Some of them have huge sky-scrapers, some have intricate road systems, others have Venice-like canal-ways, but all of them are unique. What adds to the fun as well though is the fact that if anything is standing upright there's a pretty good chance that you can shoot a large weapon of some description at it and make it fall over. And in a very large puff of smoke.

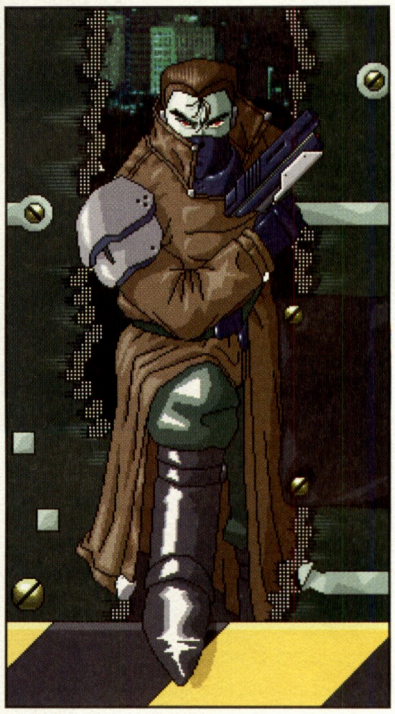
But it's not just the scenery that's polygon-based – even the vehicles are generated using fairly complex, guru-shaded polygons. Although not properly implemented fully in the preview version we saw, there is a good chance that the finished game will feature the vehicles from *Hi-Octane* as well as the obligatory collection of police cars and hover-Skodas (or whatever).

From what we've seen, there's a pretty good chance that *Syndicate Wars* will turn out to be yet another Bullfrog classic. The mission structure is more story-based than before and the gameplay should boast more depth than the basic strategy blastathon of the original game. Hopefully we'll be able to bring you a full review in a couple of months. **Z**

(Above right) The light-sourcing on the cityscapes is incredibly effective and gives the game a dark and foreboding look.

(Right) Many of the designs – from the cityscapes to the vehicles – have quite obviously been inspired by *Bladerunner*.

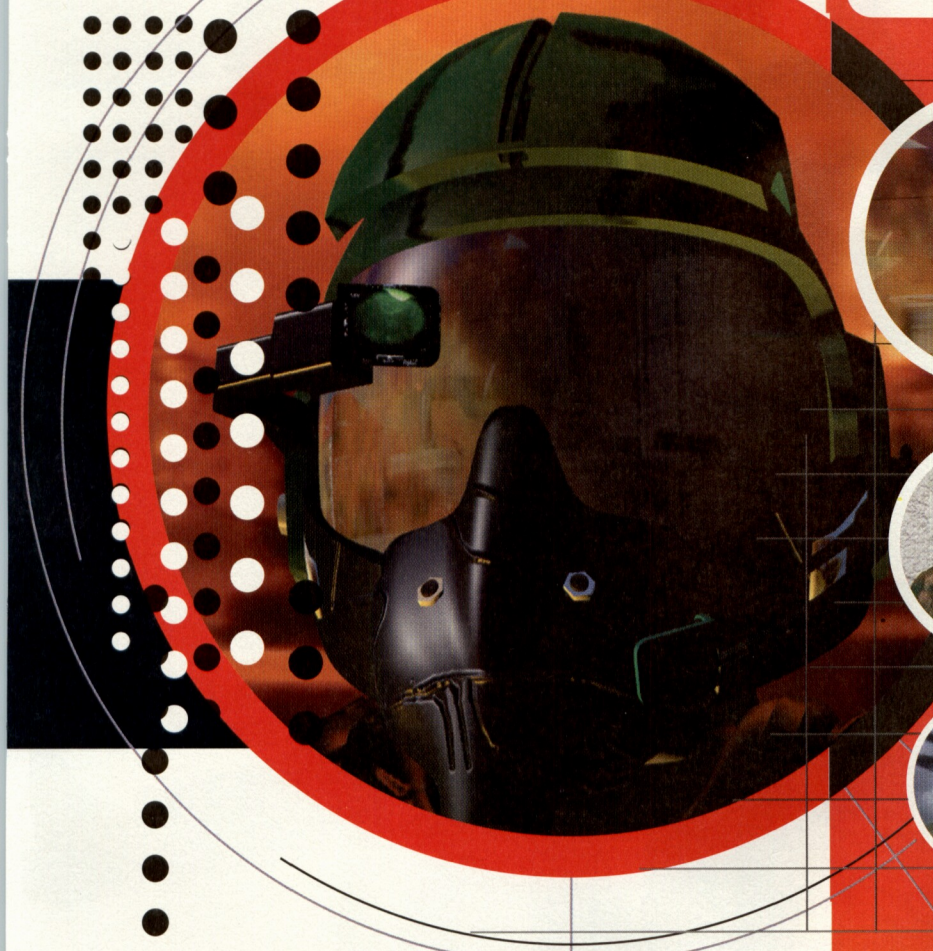
(Below) The video walls feature animations from previous Bullfrog releases. Neat, huh?







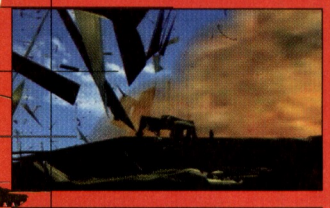
RED GHOST





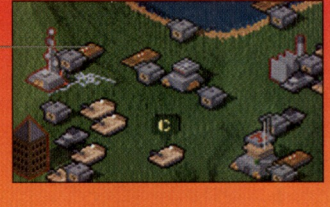












Red ghost is a superb audio visual experience

that combines the best elements of action

strategy and simulation in one explosive game

COMMAND AND CONTROL AN INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL FORCES UNIT WITH ORDERS TO ATTACK AND DESTROY AN ULTRA SECRET MILITARY FORCE KNOWN ONLY AS RED GHOST. THE MISSION IS TOP SECRET AND MUST BE CARRIED OUT CLINICALLY AND EFFICIENTLY. SKILFUL MANAGEMENT OF TROOPS AND RESOURCES ARE VITAL TO ACHIEVE MULTIPLE MISSION OBJECTIVES.

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GATEWAY 2000

"You've got a friend in the business."

Looking back

FIFA 96

(EA Sports)

Reviewed issue 33

It has been said in the office that poor old Jeremy was a bit lenient on *FIFA 96*, especially in light of the recent arrival of *Actua Soccer* (which is indeed a GOD among games). Yes, the graphics are very good and yes, the 'Virtual Stadium' is rather fabby, but the gameplay just doesn't really have what it takes. The control system is all a bit 'off' and you don't always feel completely in control. The computer players' AI is so advanced in fact that you could quite easily leave the game alone and let it get on with things itself. It was peddled as something of a feature, but we don't believe that for one minute, do we?

HEXEN

(GT Interactive)

Reviewed issue 33

The more you play it the better it gets. Okay, it'll never achieve the kudos of *Doom*, but this really is an absolutely top-notch game. You'll find that rather than just roaming around shooting things indiscriminately, *Hexen* gives you a sense of purpose – you're actually roaming around trying to DO something. The interactive scenery is wonderful (there's nothing quite like running around smashing windows with your fists) and the monsters and spells are all superb. If you missed our 36-page feature about the game last month, believe us, *Hexen* really is tops. If you're one of the legions of *Doom* fans, you'll love this.

DESTRUCTION DERBY

(Sony Interactive)

Reviewed issue 33

Apparently the PlayStation version of *Destruction Derby* is the fastest selling CD-ROM game of all time – beating even our favourite, the mighty *Command & Conquer* (which of course everyone NEEDS to own a copy of). The PC version is a bloody smart conversion which we rather enjoyed playing last month – it was, after all, our cover girl. However, once you've played the thing for a few weeks the novelty does tend to wear off – the destruction bits get tedious and the racing element just doesn't have what it takes. In the long run this is going to be something that will probably only really appeal to people with networks.



THANKS THIS MONTH

Steve McKevitt (Gremlin), and his Dad
Jim Beaven (Virgin)
Doug Johns (Virgin)
Jason Dutton (MicroProse)
Santa's Little Helpers

Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

Actua Soccer
The Dig
Rebel Assault 2
Hexen
Su27 Flanker

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

Aliens: Comic Book
Action Soccer
Fighter Duel
Cyberbykes
Mortal Coil

ZONE

THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

90+ *CLASSIC*
Drop-dead brilliant, fab, skill, top, cool, excellent, almost as good as sex... etc, etc. Virtually flawless in all departments and oozing, yes *oozing* playability.

80–89 *RECOMMENDED*
Rather jolly super, but just not quite up to it in the sexual conquest stakes. More like a good snog really. One of those experiences that's more than adequate all round.

70–79
A good idea that's been reasonably well-implemented, but not awfully original. A bit like someone coming up to you and saying, "Do you come here often?" The sort of game you'd go for if you were pissed... or a bit desperate.

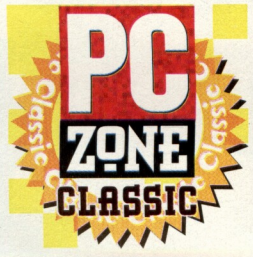
60–69
Just above average, but absolutely nothing to write home and tell mum about. Adequate presentation, mediocre gameplay and failing to make the grade in the originality stakes.

50–59
Averagely average Mr McAverage. Any game getting a score around this mark has absolutely nothing special about it whatsoever and will probably be forgotten almost immediately.

40–49
A just about bearable game which notches up a number of crippling flaws. The presentation ain't hot and the gameplay's worse.

20–39
Naff, and definitely worth avoiding at all costs.

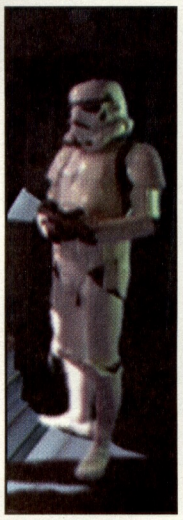
20 and below *PANTS*
Absolute, complete and utter crap. It doesn't get much worse than this and therefore deserves the ultimate accolade... the *PC Zone* big, blue pants award for extreme naffness.







(Below) We wouldn't recommend offending the Stormtroopers in *Rebel Assault 2* with yet another crap joke – at least not while they're holding all that fire power...

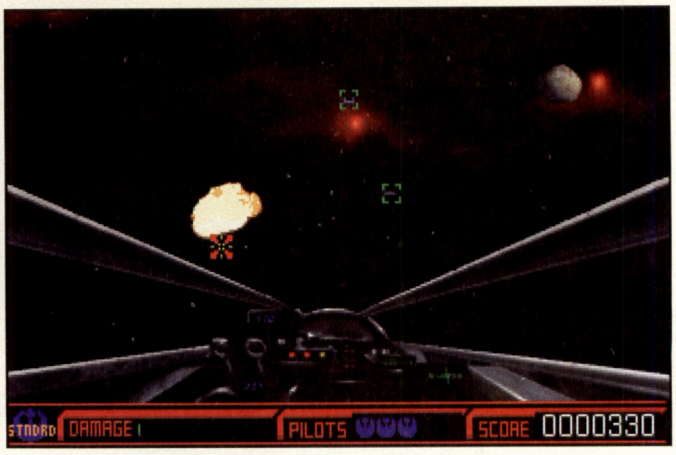


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Since the heroic figures who represent the Rebel Forces in the *Star Wars* universe tend to be rugged, handsome and ideologically sound individuals, we immediately thought of Charlie Brooker when *Rebel Assault 2* arrived in the office. Because there's nothing we like more than a bit of comic juxtaposition.

BEFORE WE GET DOWN TO THE nitty-gritty with *Rebel Assault 2*, let's rewind back to 1993 and remind ourselves of the blistering success of its predecessor, *Rebel Assault*, er, *One*. It sold more than a million copies – making it the best-selling PC CD-ROM game of all time – and probably did more to influence the sales of CD drives to PC owners than any amount of smarmy in-store sales talk ever could. It looked great, sounded great, contained loads of full-screen FMV and was so '*Star Wars*-y' in look and feel that many a sci-fi fan began to feel sexually aroused when they first saw it running. It was an Industry Landmark.

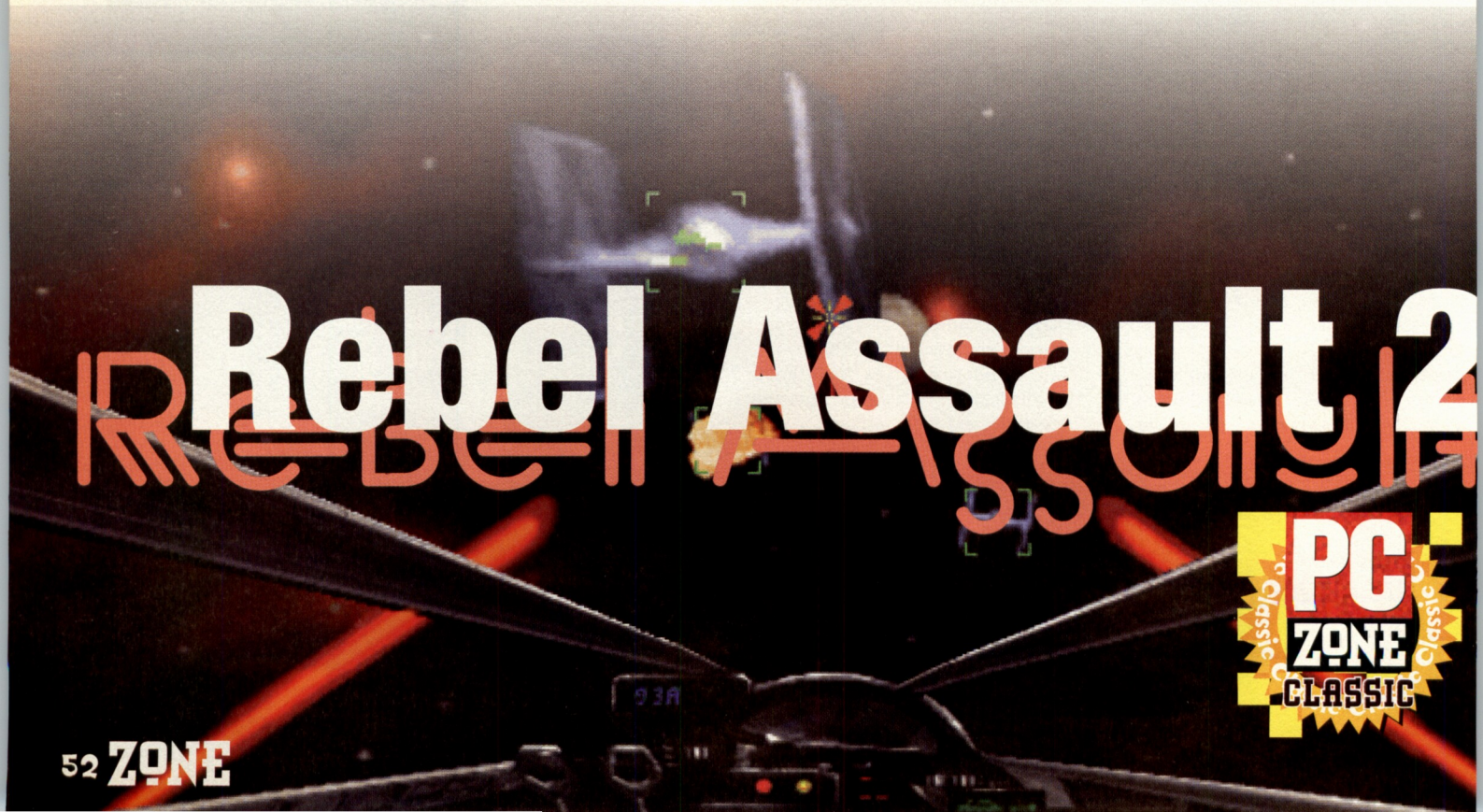
Er... financially, at least. For a while Rebel Numero Uno sent cash registers worldwide ringing like a red alert in a bell factory, it divided the opinion of gamesplayers at the same time. There were those who loved it so much that they had to build makeshift shrines in its honour in the corner of their living rooms. And then there were those who said it was a swizz, a con, an insult to 'real' gamesplayers everywhere, and wished a pox upon the game and its followers.

Anyway, the two sides bickered endlessly over the game's merit, and although the debate became heated at times, they preferred to joust in the letters pages of games mags or clash in the depths of the USENET newsgroups instead of doing the logical thing: in other words, arranging for the two sides to meet in a park somewhere over the Bank Holiday weekend, strip to the waist, and settle the thing like men. Anyhow, whichever side of the fence you're on, you probably have some preconceptions about the merits of *Rebel Assault 2*; that is unless you're new to PC games altogether, in which case you're probably too busy trying to work out what 'full-screen FMV' in the opening paragraph means to have even read this far. So hurry up, slowpoke.

Obligatory plot description

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, a noble band of Rebels took on the might of the evil Empire and succeeded in blowing up the awesome Death Star, an immense and terrifying eyeball-shaped weapon of destruction capable of destroying entire planets, thanks to a couple of well-aimed photon torpedoes up its architectural ringpiece. The Empire was, to put it mildly, miffed. So miffed in fact, it set about building a secret weapon in order to finally give them Rebs what for.

And since no weapon can really be kept 'secret' if you're going to set about testing it somewhere where people may notice (such as the Pacific Ocean), the Empire decided to begin trial runs of its new hardware in the middle of the



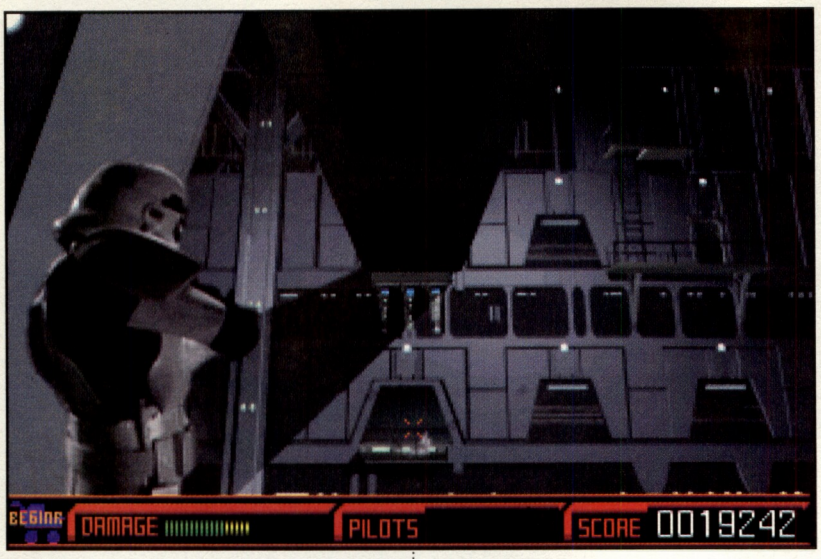


Mindless shoot 'em ups are great!

Rebel 2 is essentially a mindless shoot 'em up. If you like that kind of thing, you'll probably love it. Here, just for the hell of it, is my own list of all-time great 'mindless shoot 'em ups':

R-Type
Xenon II
Cosmo Gang (obscure trippy Japanese *Space Invaders* clone)
Galaxians
Defender
Tempest 2000 (the only decent Jaguar game)
Pulstar (on the Neo Geo CD)
Charles Whitman (University of Texas, up the watchtower, during the 1960s)

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Dreithton Nebula – a spooky, scary corner of space surrounded by rumours of weird goings-on and the like. Well, this sort of skullduggery really isn't on, so you (yes, YOU), have been sent into the area along with a few chums, to find out just what the Sam Hill they're up to.



Your mission leads you through a variety of scenarios – perilous asteroid belts, one-man assaults on military bases, covert sabotage operations – but somehow things always seem to end up the same way. That is, with you emptying endless rounds of laser fire into virtually anything that moves.

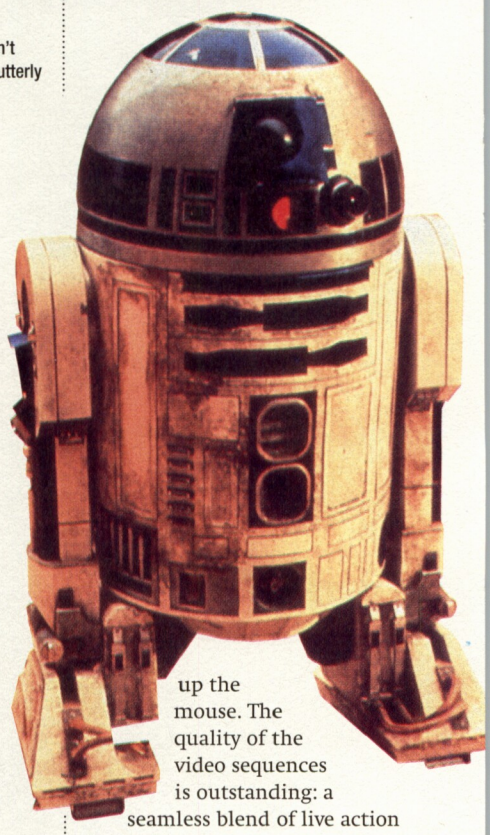
Ooh, it looks nice, doesn't it?

Yes, it does. From the offset, *Rebel Assault 2* rolls up its sleeves, grabs the back of your head and plunges it firmly into a bucket of LucasArts gloss. Sumptuous cut-scenes, that familiar rousing score, and a smattering of instantly recognisable icons (Big Bad Darth, Stormtroopers, and a couple of errant R2 units) draw you in before you've so much as picked up the mouse. The quality of the video sequences is outstanding: a seamless blend of live action and rendered graphics that wouldn't look out of place up there on the silver screen.

The game itself looks equally classy, and features plenty of variety to keep you entertained. It's basically a mixture of on-foot combat scenarios, cockpit view interstellar blasting, and external view ship manoeuvring, spread across 15 levels. One minute you're donning infra-red goggles to hunt down



(Left and above) Stormtroopers don't take the Utterly Butterly challenge lightly.



(Below) Prunes, prunes. I must have some prunes!



But I hated Rebel Assault 1

As I've mentioned elsewhere in this magnum opus, *Rebel Assault 1* was heavily criticised by approximately half the people who played it. So let's see which of these arguments apply to *Rebel 2*...

Gripe Number One:
"It's too linear. You don't have enough control over the game."

Hmm. True. *Rebel Assault 2* is also a 'straight line' of a game, but it does allow for a little more freedom of movement. The size of the flight corridor has been increased for the spaceflight sections, and in the on-foot segments, you can now duck, cover, and hide behind pillars and the like. It may not sound like a huge improvement, but an improvement it definitely is.

Gripe Number Two:
"The controls are abysmal! This ship handles like a pig on stilts!"

Ahh. Now this really has changed, the ships in *Rebel 2* handle far more smoothly. Remember that horrible canyon right at the start of the first game? You know, the one you kept crashing into? Well, it's back in *Rebel 2*, only this time you're in a TIE Fighter and can actually fly the damn thing properly. At least I had no difficulty, so there.

Gripe Number Three:
"It's not fair. I haven't got a CD-ROM drive for my PC. I can't play it."

Shucks, well there's no change there, knucklehead. Those of you with single-speed drives, however, will also be left wailing. It's tough luck, I'm afraid; you'll have to deal with it in whatever way you can. Why not turn to drink? It'll work out cheaper than owning a PC, and you'll meet lots of interesting people. Except you won't know who the hell they are.



(Above) Fancy cod in butter sauce tonight dear?

(Right) The Rebels' fondness for Pop Tarts causes another toaster explosion.

Stormtroopers in the dark, and the next you're trying to get the Millennium Falcon through a nightmarish maze of tunnels with its chassis and no-claims bonus intact. Movement is fairly limited, and you have hardly any 'choice' over your path; for instance, in the cockpit sections you can steer the ship quite a way up, down, left, or right – but you can't avoid hurtling inexorably forwards towards certain doom as you do so. Think of it as a grand metaphor for life. Meanwhile the on-foot sections are a matter of choosing when to duck and which direction to fire in. It's simple, but it's fun.

Point-and-click adventure

When all's said and done, however, it has to be said that *Rebel Assault 2's* main appeal stems from its astonishing visuals and high-fibre *Star Wars* vibe. However, as far as gameplay goes, it's a no-brainer, a shoot 'em up with the odd 'piloting' bit bunged in. Now don't get me wrong, I've nothing against mindless shoot 'em ups in the slightest (I've even listed my faves in a panel to prove it), but I know that there's plenty of you who do. More to the point, there's plenty of you who'd prefer to spend your money on games with more depth. If that's the case, stick to *X-Wing* or *TIE Fighter* (both of which are far more rewarding than either of the *Rebel Assault* games).

(Below) I feel like dancing, does my hair look alright?



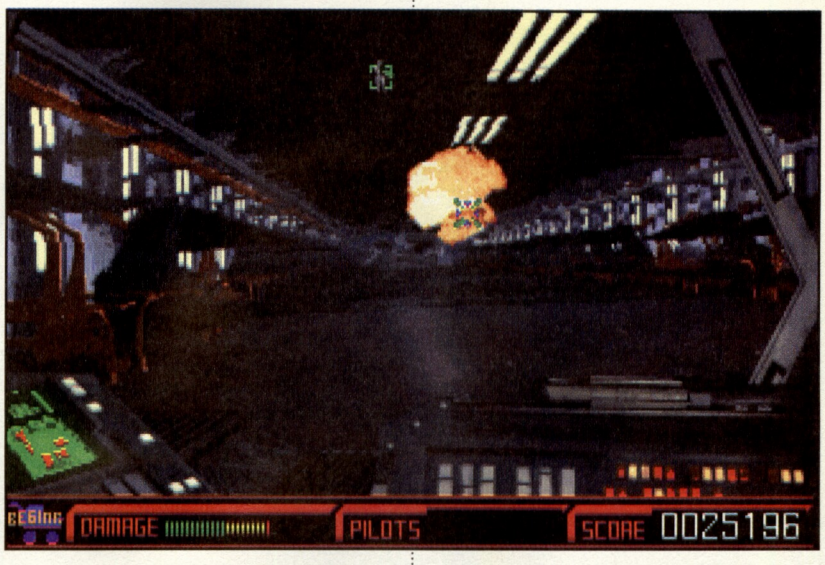
Oh my god, it's a giant ball

If you ask me there's just one flaw with the *Star Wars* films – and that's the Death Star. It just isn't scary enough, I'm afraid. At the end of the day it's a lightly-defended, bloated metallic beachball with a bloody big gun inside it. Frankly, if I was in charge of development at Empire HQ, I think I could have come up with something far more threatening. Here's a few of my suggestions:

The Death Cube
Very similar in concept to the Death Star, but with some really sharp corners on it which could give you a nasty cut if you struck it a glancing blow.

The Death Foot
A gigantic boot-shaped star destroyer that jumps out of hyperspace next to defenceless planets, then proceeds to stomp up and down on the surface, crushing millions of people like ants, demolishing cities and setting off tidal waves. Bloody petrifying.

The Death Face-at-the-window
Utilising the finest nanotechnology, the Death Face contains all the personnel and firepower of the original Death Star, yet is no bigger than a human head. It's got a really scary face painted on the front and it simply hovers outside the windows of Rebel activists in the middle of the night, frightens the bejesus out of them, then flies off into the night, leaving the victim(s) quaking with fear until dawn breaks.



Where are they now?

Ever wondered what became of your particular *Star Wars* favourites? There's no longer any need to stay awake night after night pondering their fates, as here we reveal all...

MARK HAMILL aka Luke Skywalker
Despite appearing in three of the highest grossing movies of all time (ie the *Star Wars* trilogy), subsequent film roles seemed a little hard to come by for the blue-eyed Skywalker kid – and they nearly always featured him in a sci-fi setting. The dubious *Slipstream* (in which he sports a beard, for chrissakes), comes to mind. Nowadays, however, Hamill is something of a CD-ROM veteran, having recorded voiceovers for *Gabriel Knight*, and taken the leading role in Origin's *Wing Commander* series.

CARRIE FISHER aka Princess Leia
Having fulfilled the fantasies of every impressionable young boy in the world by finally stripping down to a metal bikini in the final *Star Wars* movie, Ms Fisher also seemed to disappear from view. She's now best known for her prowess as a novelist and screenwriter. She's had a lot of success – *Postcards From The Edge*, for instance – but all this pales somewhat in light of the fact that she was partly responsible for penning the script for *Sister Act* – surely enough to make anybody want to smack her in the mouth.

HARRISON FORD aka Han Solo
Um... no, sorry, you've got me there. Can't place him. Ooh, the name rings a bell... was he in *Three Men And A Little Lady*?

»



If, on the other hand, you fancy a bit of immediate action, and you're itching for a game which a) doesn't require you to read a 256-page manual and spend a month memorising the controls, and b) will impress the kecks off your next-door neighbour, then *Rebel Assault 2* may be a smart purchase. It's certainly very addictive in the short term; each time you lose a life you'll be right back in there, determined to clear the round *this time*, and the added bonus of a fully customisable difficulty setting (with which you can choose the number of enemies, damage, etc etc) means that it should keep avid fans going until the wee small hours.

And this presents me with a little problem. It's time to come up with a score, y'see. Now, if I award *Rebel Assault 2* a spoogetastic 90-plus rating, loads of you will rush out and buy it. Half of you will love it to pieces and kiss it and cuddle it and take it off to a dark room and do downright disgusting things to it. And the other half will consider it a shallow blasting exercise and a terrible waste of money. Then there'll be a bloody big row, and since I'm stuck in the middle of it, I'll probably come off worst. I'll get my hair pulled, and my nose bloodied, and it'll just get me angry. And as if that's not bad enough, because I'm such a big, scary, street-fighting sort of bloke, I just might end up inadvertantly killing someone simply because I don't know my own strength. So to avoid any such unpleasantness, I'm going to split this thing right down the middle.

Obviously, it has to be said that the game is brilliant... for most people. It has *Star Wars* references, lots of shooting, excellent visuals, cool sound and er, *Star Wars* references. It also has a story that's easily as cool as most of the new novels that have been produced by the likes of Timothy Zahn et al.

On the other hand, if you hate *Star Wars*, you are not only clearly mad and in need of medical attention, but you also stand a pretty good chance of not enjoying this. Secondly, if you hate linear arcade shooting things, this really isn't going to appeal. People like this will not agree with our 90 per cent rating. We acknowledge this... so don't write in and tell us. We know. Z

Tech specs

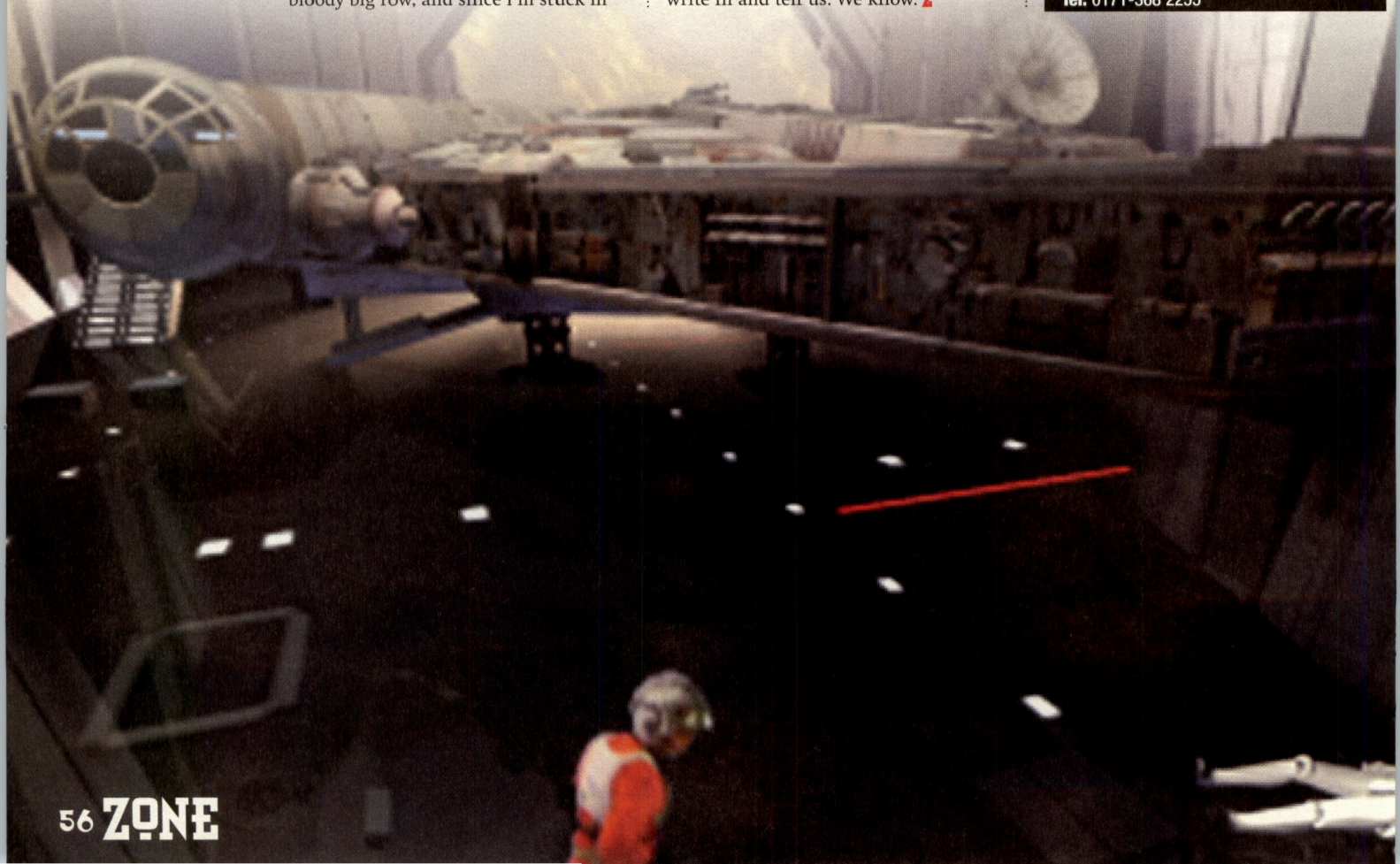
Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick

Score

90

Ahhh... solid, classy, gorgeous action. Who needs a brain when you've got the simple thrill of quick-fire gunplay to distract you?

Price: £49.99 **Release Date:** December
Publisher: LucasArts/VIE
Tel: 0171-368 2255



FRANKENSTEIN

Through The Eyes Of THE MONSTER™

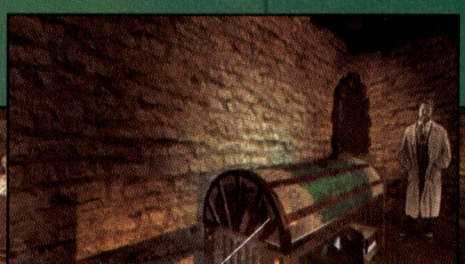


Wake up...
It's time to meet your maker.

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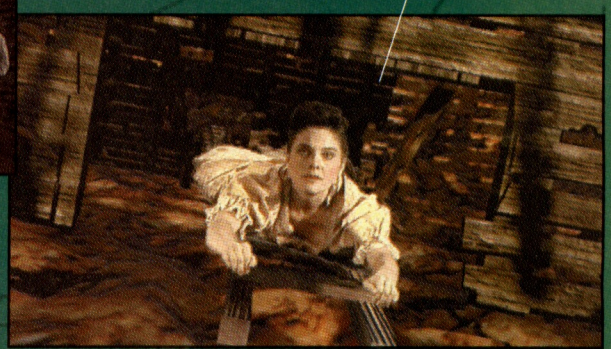
e game is state-of-the-art, featuring
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set in extremely realistic 3-D
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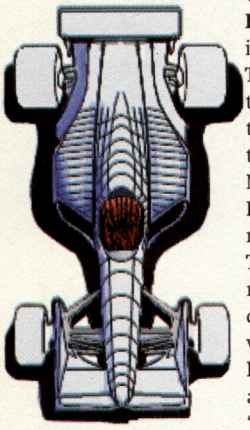
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F1 Grand Prix

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

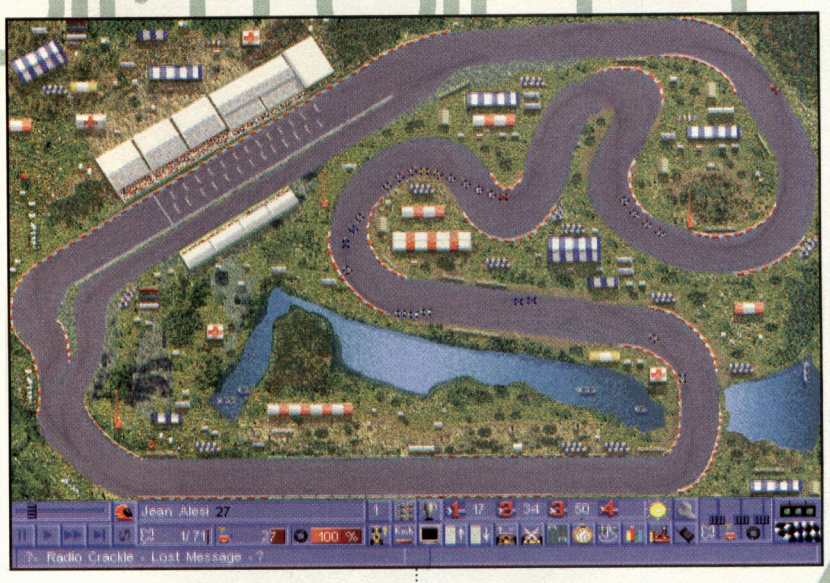
Duncan MacDonald can't even 'manage' his minuscule gas bill payments properly, so quite why we chose him to review *F1 Grand Prix Manager*, in which most numbers have six zeros after them... well, who knows?



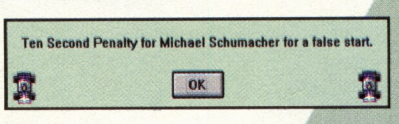
I'D BETTER EXPLAIN THAT I'VE DECIDED to review this game from the viewpoint of a pretend Frank Williams and, seeing as how that means I must sadly be paralysed from the neck down, I'm aided (on the mouse) by an imaginary friend called Tufty.

Chapter One: a team is born

Frank Williams: Okay, I want to start from scratch, with just a go-kart, set in the '60s with pounds, shillings and pence – none of this bloody decimal nonsense. Click the pertinent icons Tufty, if you would.
Tufty: Sorry Frank, you have to begin in 1995. *Grand Prix Manager* starts from 'now' and goes, er, into the future.
Frank: Preposterous! What can I do then? Explain!
Tufty: Well, there are a handful of preset scenarios, with objectives and time limits, such as winning a constructors' championship inside three years for instance. That sort of thing.
Frank: Yes? Or?
Tufty: Or there's the career mode, with variable difficulty levels.
Frank: Then give me a career, and make it tougher than a two-second steak.
Tufty: *(Clicks icon)* Right, now you have to pick a team. If you want it *really* hard then I suggest you choose from nearer the bottom of the list, like Sauber or Minardi or something.
Frank: Give me Tyrrell... and Tufty, make it snappy, will you?
Tufty: *(Clicks icon)* Okay. You're now manager of Tyrrell. See? But you can change the names and stuff. Do you want me to do that?
Frank: Yes, call the team 'Williams' – and change the manager's name to 'Frank Williams'. That's me!
Tufty: But Frank, there's already a 'Williams', up at the top... your real team, like your real life one.
Frank: I don't care. Just call my new team 'Williams' as well.
Tufty: But it'll get confusing. It'll be Williams, Benetton, McLaren, Ferrari, etc, etc, and then Williams again.



Frank: I said I don't care, damnit! Change my new team's name to Williams and my real Williams team's name to, er, Benetton.
Tufty: *(Sigh, followed by click)*



Chapter Two: Frank hires and fires

Frank: Trim the design team by five, and lose two of the mechanics – replace them with stupid but cheaper ones. Then spend the difference on another top engineer. Cancel Group Four Security's contract and hire Rod, Jane & Freddy instead. Who are our drivers?
Tufty: *(Click)* Ukyo Katayama, Mika Salo.
Frank: Whaaaat???
Tufty: I know, but you'll grow to love them, honestly.
Frank: No I won't. Sack the Jap, drop the Finn's wages.
Tufty: But what about a replacement for Katayama? It's the beginning of the season, it won't be easy.
Frank: Get Superjaw!
Tufty: The programme won't let me – Coulthard's already contracted to your, er, 'other' team. It'll be a similar story elsewhere, too, I shouldn't wonder. Besides... the budget.

Frank: What about Jan Magnusson?
Tufty: *(Clicks icon)* Nice idea, but he's not here. Someone with similarly impressive Formula 3000 stats might exist under a made-up name in the 'rookie' section.
Frank: Go on then.
Tufty: *(Click)* Didier Blurdeblur, Eric Pantze, and Barry Buckell.
Frank: Go for Eric Pantze. Offer him two pence for the season, with a one pence bonus if he somehow wins a race.
Tufty: Okay. And the test driver?
Frank: Three's a crowd.

Chapter Three: Menu Crazy...

Frank: ***1*** Spend on endorsing outside products for a high company profile. ***2*** Plaster adverts (for anyone, for the right price) all over our cars and drivers. ***3*** Check incoming mail - it could be simply a contractual glitch regarding a tyre supplier or new rules from the FIA. ***4*** Allocate resource time between internal departments so that a new chassis is available next season while

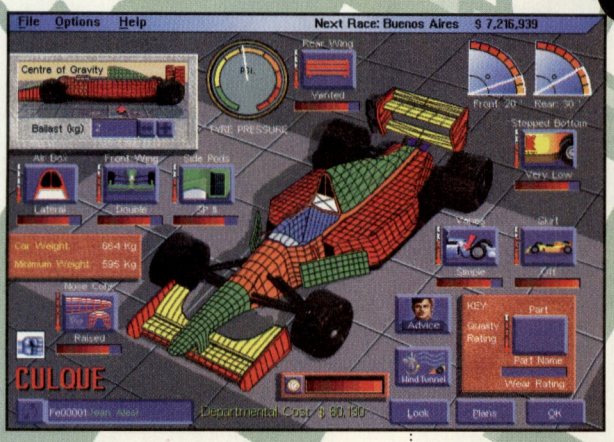


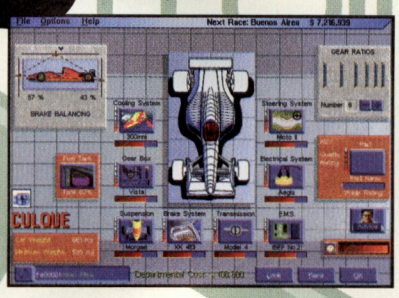
(Right) There are far more icons to click on than is really particularly healthy!





Manager





car parts are still being invented or improved; and I want a better in-car communication system.

5 Build new in-house facilities such as a wind tunnel, or a CAD station, to save on rental fees, long-term.

6 Get our security people to probe Ferrari – I've a suspicion it's come up with a new gearbox. In fact I've got a list of things for you to do. Here, take it.

Tufty: Thanks! Er, but are you sure that letting that tricycle manufacturer use our logo was such a good idea?

Frank: Shut up. Just press the buttons.

(Above and above right) You can prat about with virtually everything on the cars. And click on some icons. Probably.

(Top left) When each race is er, raced, you get a nifty top-down view of it.

Chapter Four: Racing Central...

Tufty: Time for Race One of the season.

Frank: Excellent. Interlagos. Do we get to partake in the qualifying?

Tufty: Yes, it's all selectable. The options are testing phase one, first round qualifying, testing phase two, second round qualifying, warm-up lap, parade lap and main race. Oh, and you can also have FMV bits. Do you want the lot?

Frank: No need... I know that track like the back of my hand, so setting up should be a doddle. Just click on the second qualifying round and the main race: leave the others on auto.

Tufty: Okay, there we go. Right, we're in qualifying session two. Oh, look, we didn't do too well in the first session, did we? 23rd and 25th. What do you want me to do now?

Frank: Lower the tyre pressures. Give me 22 degrees of front wing and 36 at the back – on both cars. Inform me when the track's emptyish.

Tufty: I'll speed time up a bit. Ahh! The track's empty now.

Frank: Send out the Finn.

Tufty: There he goes. He could be a bit better though, couldn't he?

Frank: Send out Pantze.

Tufty: Aaaah, that's an improvement. He's not going very fast though, do you want me to tell him to step on it?

Frank: No, bring him back to the pits... I'm having second thoughts about those tyre pressures. Pump them up a tad, then send him straight back out again.

Tufty: He's in the pits, I've pumped them up, I've added some fuel, and he's off again. Hey, look at him go!

Frank: That's very good. Tell him to disregard tyre wear, we might squeeze an extra couple of laps out of him.

Chapter Five: The Race Continues...

Tufty: Mika's improved his grid place by one even though he didn't actually seem to finish qualifying. And Pantze is up to the 19th spot. A two-stop race for both of them?

Frank: Yes. Bring in the Finn on 22 and 42, and Pantze on 24 and 40. Start the race, and speed it up a bit. *(Time passes)*

Tufty: *(Lap 18)* Um, Pantze's gone crap.

Frank: *(Lap 25)* And now the Finn's car has broken down. Damn. That's almost as annoying as Jilly Goolden. Quit the race, I want to go home.

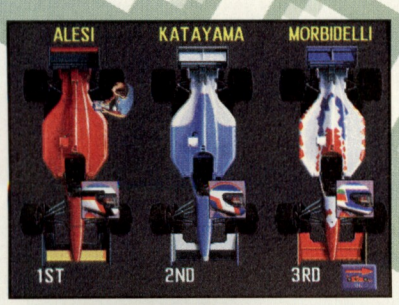
Chapter Six: Back At The Williams/Tyrrell HQ...

Frank: Check my mail. *(Click)* Hmmm, the Finn's breakdown was due to a spare part failure. Give the contract to KwikFit. Blimey, the FIA have sent us a cheque... one of our chaps finished 14th. Not bad. Go and see about potential sponsors. Yes! Give ZVM the expensive upper helmet position. Cut the Finn's wages again: that'll teach him to come from such a ridiculous country. (He carries on like this for a trillion years; Williams/Tyrrell eventually go bust after the seventh race of the season. Tufty has clicked on 289000 icons.)

Epilogue...

For the die-hard F1 nut, *Grand Prix Simulator* is obviously the bees' knees (not that there's much competition). It's a tad fiddly, the learning curve's a bit of a bastard, the manual's not much help, but hey! – all part of the fun, non?

I'll leave you with an unintentionally hilarious coverline from *Grand Prix Simulator's* in-game F1 NEWS magazine... "Taki Inoue Dominates!" Yeah, right. And I'm the president of Fiji. **Z**



(Left) The top three drivers and, gosh, none of my cars are there. Shucks.

(Right) Merchandise? Bloody hell, they think of everything don't they?



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All Windows compatible sound cards
Controls: Mouse
Note: Requires Windows 3.0 or above

Score

85

The best Grand Prix Management sim available... er, but it's also the only one.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** December
Publisher: MicroProse **Tel:** 01454 326532

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

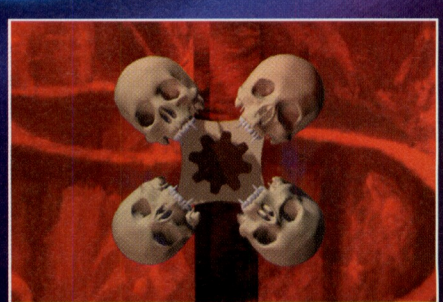
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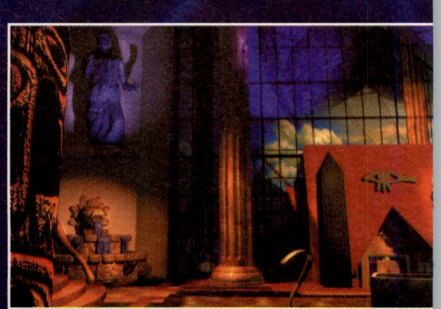


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Stonekeep



Paul Presley once found a peculiar stone in a graveyard that he's kept hold of ever since. He didn't throw it away because he he knew that one day it would provide a poor play on words for this very review. How's that for foresight?

(Above) What? You're calling *me* ugly?

(Below) The hi-res graphics make up for the occasionally repetitive gameplay.

YOUR IMAGINATION. THAT'S WHAT I want you to experiment with today, my little cherry blossoms. I'd like you to close your eyes (preferably after reading the rest of this paragraph), take several deep breaths, think hard and picture the scene at the offices of Interplay some two years ago. I imagine it went something like this:

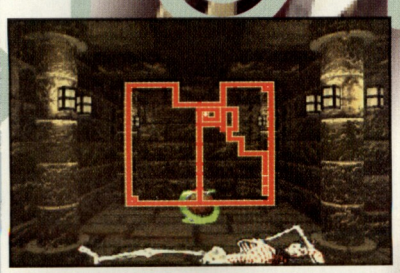
Game Designer: Sir, sir! I've got this idea for a game!
Boss: Quiet, Jenkins. I'm playing this rather fabbo *Eye Of The Beholder*.
GD: That's just it sir, it's like *Eye Of The Beholder* only much, much better.
Boss: Better, Jenkins?
GD: Better graphics, better controls, better storyline. Just better, sir.
Boss: Righto Jenkins, you've got me interested...

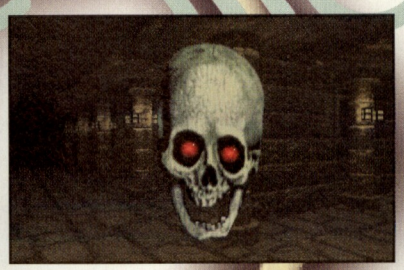
And so it went. Of course this being America, the designer's name was probably Jim-Bob or something, but you get the drift. Man thinks up game. Man pitches game. Man gets contract to design game. It's the age-old story. Now then, think on after a year has passed:
Game Designer: You called, sir?
Boss: You've changed your name, Jim-Bob.
GD: Yes, sir. The previous one didn't fit with the theatrical narration.
Boss: I see. How's the game coming on?
GD: Very well, sir. I'm glad to say it's almost half-finished.
Boss: It's just that, well, there's this *Doom* thing.
GD: Um, yes sir.
Boss: And it's rather good. Y'all.
GD: Just a passing fancy sir. Nothing to worry about. The flick-screen game will never die.
Boss: As long as you're sure Jenk... Jim-Bob.

And so exits the designer, a little less sure of himself than before. *Doom* won't stick, surely? It's shareware after all, and those games never last long. Of course there was that *Ultima Underworld* thing... Anyhow, another year passes. *Doom* has become so ludicrously huge it's now a genre and a hundred other games have all tried to rip it off. The designer and the boss meet once more (perhaps under a bridge or in a park):

Game Designer: Finished, sir. You can go to the press with it now, sir.
Boss: They'll crucify us, won't they Jim-Bob?
GD: Probably sir.
Boss: You said *Doom* wouldn't last. That flick-screen games would never die.
GD: Heh, just goes to show, eh sir?
Boss: It just goes to show. Goes to show.
GD: Sir?
Boss: Someone's for the chop, Jim-Bob.
GD: Yes, sir.
Boss: You or me, in fact.
GD: Yes sir.
Boss: Let's face it, it's you.
GD: You've been watching that *Blackadder*, haven't you sir?
Boss: Don't bother turning up in the office tomorrow Jim-Bob.
GD: Yes, sir.

A sad tale perhaps, but one that holds a warning for all promising game designers out there. Never underestimate a shareware game that could very well turn out to be your downfall. The point to all this is, of course, that *Stonekeep* has now arrived after a very long wait and that it's a flick-screen game.



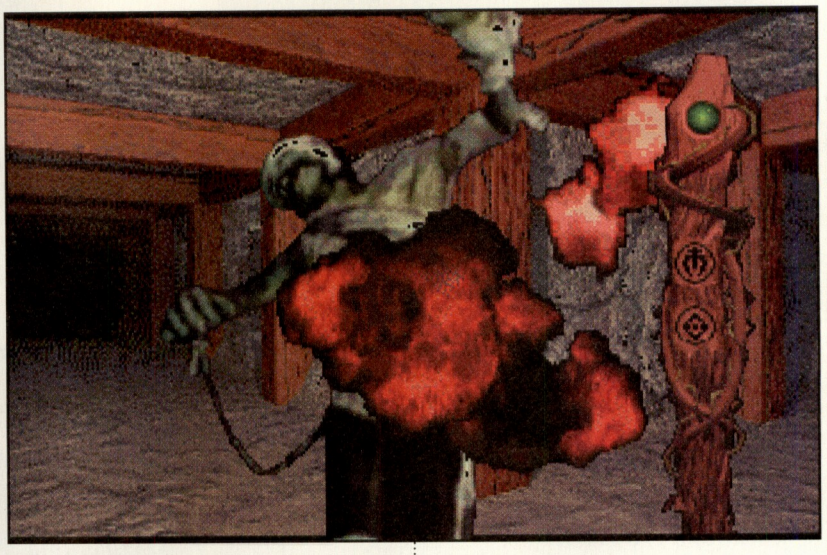




Strolling along, singing this song, side by side

One of the better aspects of *Stonekeep* is the multi-character party. As you trundle through the game you'll occasionally pick up an ally, a cohort, a friend and a confidante. Normally in games of this ilk, this would mean you'd have to start controlling everyone, deciding on things like where they stand, how they fight and who. Not so. *Stonekeep* has a clever little computer controller running the other characters so that while you're busy slashing at the goblin to your right with your sword, your dwarven chum is busy hacking away at the one on the left with his axe, and you don't have to worry about him. They also have a habit of changing tactics if necessary, although I found that chucking an explosive flask of burning oil at a hapless goblin that was running away scared to be a touch on the overkill side of things. Still, you have to admire his passion.





« I remember them

Of course you do. *Dungeon Master II* tried to reawaken the slumbering giant a while back, only to fall at the hands of the *Doom* all-conquering chainsaw. Now *Stonekeep* is giving it another shot and, although it certainly looks impressive, plays fairly well and is generally pretty okay, there's always this constant nagging doubt at the back of your mind that says, "What are you doing? This is a flick-screen game. They went out years ago. Stop it at once". And it just means that no matter how good it may be, *Stonekeep* will *always* look and feel dated.

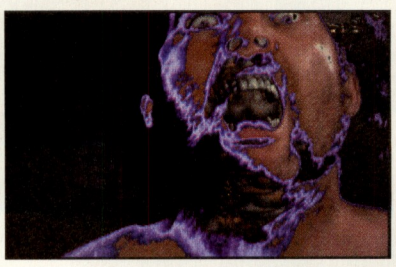
That said, its favourable points are that it has a nice, easy to handle control method, there's a wide variety of levels to keep you interested, and there's a thoughtful experience system allowing your character(s) to become more skilled with their weapons the more they use them. On the minus side it's flick-screen, the levels are laid out with the usual wandering monster routines that I find incredibly annoying (there's none of the clever social interaction between races and intricate storylines that were shown in the *Ultima Underworld* series for example), it's flick-screen, there's no easy way to identify certain objects – you have to wade through an interminable journal to identify things when you could so easily have just put them over an 'eye' icon or something, it's flick-screen *(You may have mentioned this already – Ed.)*, the stock graphic sources, while nice enough in themselves, soon become very repetitive indeed and last but not least, it's flick-screen *(I think you're obsessed – Ed.)*.

(Above right) The action in some of the later levels is literally explosive.

(Below left) This dude looks a bit serious. Must be near the end of the level.

(Below right) The graphics for the gory bits are frighteningly realistic.





Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX
Hard Disk Space: 30Mb
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Stoneybridging the gap

So now you're familiar with the problem I have with *Stonekeep* – and it's one that you're going to have to make your own decision on. Some of you may still hanker after those halcyon days of 1993, before BFGs, before plasma guns, before Macca, but for most of us *Stonekeep* is a step backwards rather than a safe middle ground. Not only is the style of play old, but the internal workings, the very gameplay if you will, is equally past it. Simple puzzles, monsters and mazes no longer do it for us. While the game was being designed, Interplay should have taken a good look at what was happening in the world of games, taken note of the subtleties, the intricacies that other titles showed, and come up with something over and above that which *Eye Of The Beholder* was delivering all that time ago. *Stonekeep* is a case of gloss but no substance. Packaging but no innards. Taggart but no Mark McManus. So why can I smell a sequel on the horizon? Z

Score

76

Well, it's better than *Eye Of The Beholder...*

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Interplay **Tel:** 01235 821666

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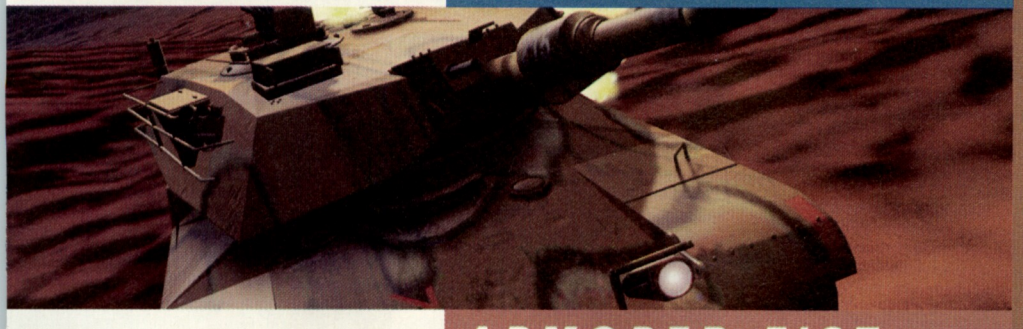
COMANCHE

RAH-66 Comanche attack helicopter-Air to Air combat



WOLFPACK

Submarine vs Destroyer naval warfare



ARMORED FIST

Command multiple tanks over 3-D terrain

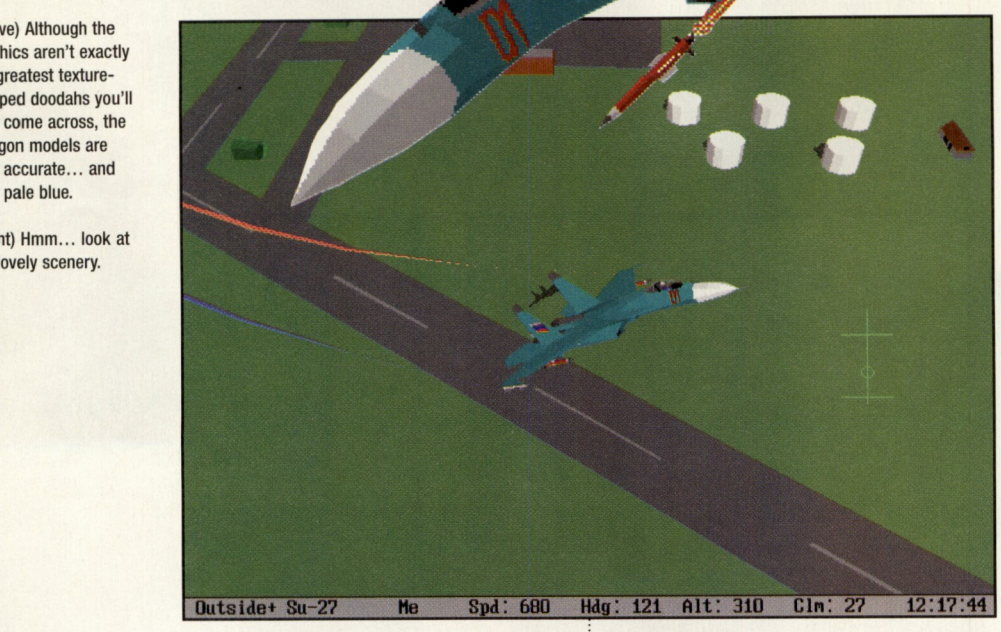
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3 CLASSIC NOVALOGIC GAMES

One of the scariest things Simon Bradley has ever seen is an *Su27* flying right next to his airliner. One of the scariest things we've ever seen is his reaction when *Su27* came in for review. That's why he's doing it...

Su27 Flanker



(Above) Although the graphics aren't exactly the greatest texture-mapped doodahs you'll ever come across, the polygon models are very accurate... and very pale blue.

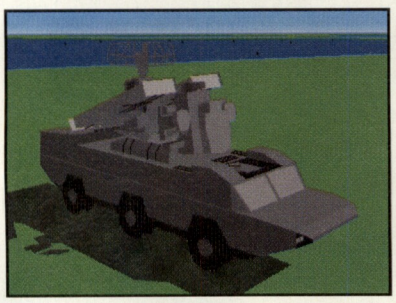
(Right) Hmm... look at the lovely scenery.

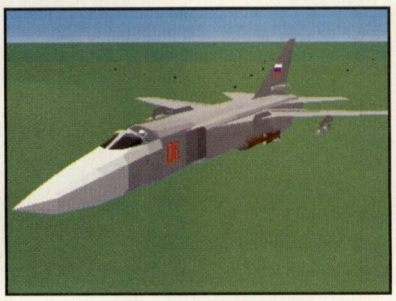
IT WAS EARLY IN THE MORNING ON AN internal flight from Moscow to Irkutsk that I saw my first Flanker. Of course, I'd seen the news footage of the big fighter wowing the crowds at Farnborough, but this was different – this was a real squadron aircraft flying a real operational mission. It was so close that I could see the real warshots on the wing pylons, and, gentle reader, I don't mind admitting that I was more than just a little uncomfortable. After all, here was the most lethal warplane in the world about 100 feet away from an elderly Aeroflot TU154, and even though I had flown the same sort of mock intercept myself, it was a funny feeling to be on the receiving end. Needless to say, the Russian pilot was totally professional. He kept a safe distance and noticeably failed to shoot us down. The rest of the journey was pretty uneventful by comparison, but that one incident has, not surprisingly, stayed with me for a long time.

The Sukhoi Su27 Flanker is a large twin-engined air superiority fighter, very similar in concept to the F-15 Eagle. Opinions are divided as to its looks, but I consider it to be one of the most beautiful aeroplanes ever made, up there with Concorde and the Spitfire IX. It was designed to tackle any threat, high or low, slow or fast, at long range and with minimum fuss. It was also designed to be able to at least hold its own in a dogfight, and as a result was the first Russian aircraft to be inherently unstable. That means that it's only the willpower of the pilot, combined with a major chunk of computer, which keeps the thing pointed where it should be, and that means a seriously manoeuvrable aeroplane. Just for good measure, the chaps at Sukhoi made sure that the Flanker could service ground or sea targets just as easily as airborne ones, thus killing off the future prospects of that other airship favourite, the MiG29. (By the way, Flanker is actually a NATO code name for the aircraft, being easier to say and remember than Su27.) The Russians stick to numbers, although unofficially the aircraft is known as 'Zhuravlik' (Crane) by its crews. There, a piece of aviation trivia to file away. Who says this magazine isn't educational?

Enough of this nonsense. What about the game?

Okay, you asked for it. I'll say this now so as to avoid wasting your time. If you're looking for a lightweight 'hop in and pole around the sky in a bit of Russian kit' type product, turn the page. This is not – repeat not – for you. If you get excited by the prospect of flying the beacons from Miami to Vancouver in







(Right) All of the ground base objects look and behave just like the real thing. They may look simplistic - but they're accurate.

(Far right) The amount of military hardware knocking around in this game is really quite staggering.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

your Cessna, you won't even take your anorak off for this. If, on the other hand, your candle is lit by close, intense dogfighting, precision surface attacks, a real-time campaign and certainly the most accurate flight model anywhere, this will make your eyes light up. Admittedly the graphics aren't really that hot, and the world area is pretty tiny, but that's it. There won't be any other criticisms in this review, because I can find none to make.

The flight model is perfect, and there are luckily none of the totally pointless gimmicks which other simulators tend to bring to the party. This means no video sequences; no gorgeous rendered graphic intro; no digitised actors. In fact, nothing apart from a cracking good simulator of a really exciting aeroplane. Actually, I am deceiving myself slightly, because this game does have a major disadvantage – where is the multi-player facility? When will companies realise that while playing with yourself can be an amusing diversion, playing with someone else is what we were made for?

What's so great, then?

So, what do you get for your forty-five quid? Well, there's no sign of skilfully acted sequences using dialogue from the Inspector Clouseau school of linguistics, no massive rendered intro sequence showing the subject aircraft disassembling all manner of enemies, no intermission cut-scenes of dead and dying Flankers or formation victory rolls. I guess by now you've probably got the picture. What do you get? You get exactly what it says on the box: a full spec maximum realism flight simulator based on an unusual aeroplane. You get an enemy who is at least as smart as you and learns from what you do. And you get a scenario which is a little too close to reality. The guys who designed this know their subject; they're Russian, you see, and as such are pretty well in tune with what goes on in the area. You also get a decent product which doesn't need a Ninja PC to avoid jerkovision.

Being Russian, the team wrote for the equipment available to them, which means that the game should still run quite happily on a 386 with EGA, though obviously you get more detail and prettier graphics with VGA and a 486. You even get the chance to fly for 'The Russian Knights' (the equivalent of The Red Arrows) in an aircraft painted right and fitted with smoke generators, as well as the more usual combat sorties.

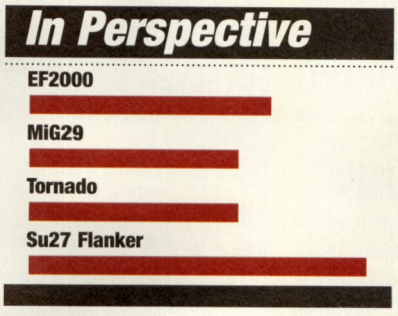
Flying the sucker

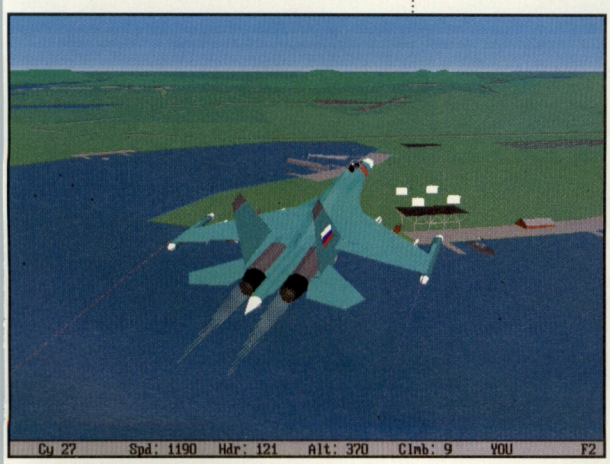
Believe me when I say that this is really rather good. Okay then let me put this into perspective: *Falcon 3* is generally regarded by aficionados as the benchmark against which to compare other combat flight simulators. *Tornado* has the edge in realism, but falls down in playability and fun factor. *Flanker* makes *Falcon* look like a Sega game. To back up such a claim, I know for a fact that the F16 can be a bit of a bitch at times: she will spin, suffer high speed stalls, buffet and do all sorts of unpleasant things if you treat her wrong. Will that happen in *Falcon 3*? Will it heck. Even with everything on maxo realism, things just don't go pear-shaped like they should. *Flanker* gives you high and low speed spins, flameouts, buffet, compressor and high speed stalls, you name it. You even get equipment failures, if you wish to include them, and the weather can be programmed in as well. This is a heavyweight product, make no mistake about it. In fact, this is probably the new benchmark for folk who get off »



(Left) The cockpit, like everything else, is a sort of naff pale blue colour and everything is written in Russian. Very useful.

In Perspective

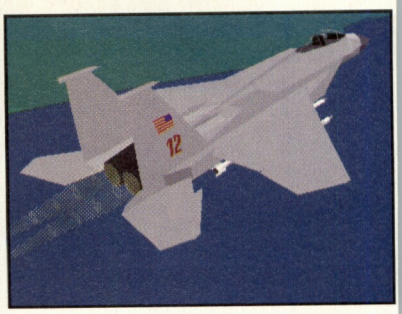






(Left) Although in theory it may sound like a naff idea, the wingtip trails give you a tremendous impression of speed.





flying combat sims (except for the lack of networking, of course).

So there you are, sitting on the piano keys at the end of runway 27. You take a look outside to see everything where it should be: the surveillance radar turning on its mast, the GCA radar nodding up and down, just as normal. Hang around long enough and a GRU guard will probably come past with his dog. This is reality with a capital R, although the graphics are still a bit second generation. Push the throttle and see everything bump about as you gain speed. At about 50km you forget that this is just on a PC and actually feel the bumps in the runway, 250km and you gently pull back to get airborne; you feel the clunk as the wheels retract. You are in the cockpit of an Su27, and the sky is your playground. I'll swear that you can feel the thrust pushing you back in your seat. As you climb out, waggle the stick around to see what happens and you'll find that you get none of the computer jet responses of lesser simulators – instead you get the progressive response of a real aeroplane. Switch to the outside view, kill the burners and pull back hard and you'll see the stabilators turn and the vapour stream off the wing root extensions. You'll also see the way the aircraft pushes wide in violent manoeuvres, just like the real thing. Do this too hard and you'll see the high speed stall develop, followed by a spin. Gentle people, this is a serious simulator, and deserves to be treated as such.

(Above) Why do those buildings look like lots of cereal packets all lined up on a snooker table? Oh, they're houses... oh, yeah, right.

Life beyond flight models

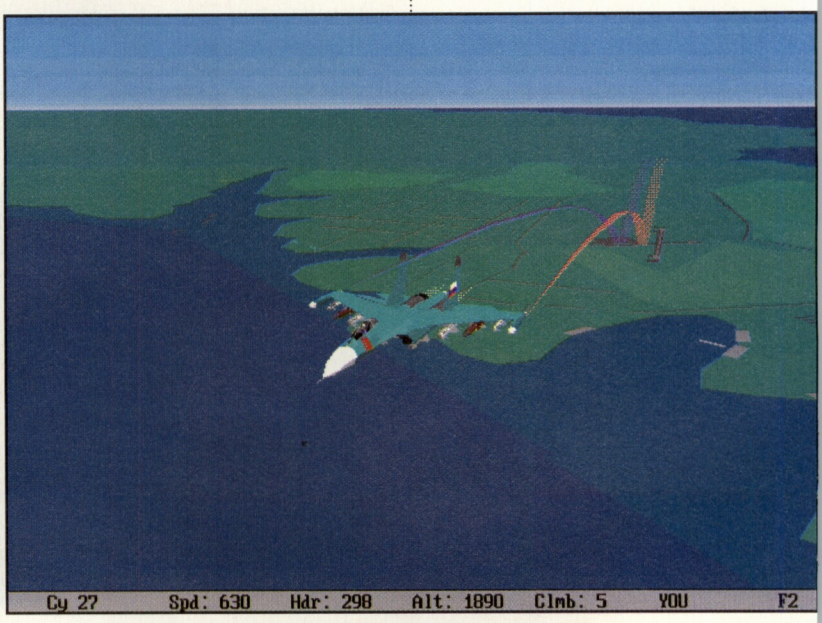
Yes, there is more to this product than a fancy flight model, although that is the crux of the whole thing really. There are loads of pre-generated one-off missions, ranging from free flight and training through to full-blown unlimited warfare, as well as the opportunity to fly aerobatics with Anatoly Kvotcher, possibly the best jet display pilot ever. Better still there is a detailed and fairly intense campaign option. The story behind this is the desire of the Russian government to reclaim Ukraine from the Ukrainian government – or at least, that's it in a nutshell. You can be Russian and fly against similar kit to your own, flown by similar pilots with similar training. It all gets pretty hairy. Throw in UN observation flights who will respond with maximum force if you even lock them up, and the whole lot becomes very exciting indeed (you'll get used to the rather neat ejection sequence quite quickly, I'm afraid).

The real icing on the cake is the facility to design your own missions, combat or otherwise, from scratch and save them for future use. You can also record your performance for post mortem if you so wish.

No frills then?

Well, that depends on how you define frills. Certainly, there are a vast number of really neat touches which set this apart from other simulators of this genre. For a start, the cockpit is in Russian - all of it (but don't worry, numbers are the same, and the manual explains where everything is). But the HUD, weapons the symbols, everything is in Cyrillic script, and damn fine it





PC ZONE

***SU-27 Flanker* from Mindscape is one of the most realistic flight simulations ever! Produced by Russian ex-pilots it features one of the most advanced flight models ever and is a real competitor for DID's EF2000.**

SPACE	FIRE WEAPON	CAPS LOCK	WEAPON SELECTION
TAB	TARGET LOCK ON/OFF	PAGE UP	INCREASE THROTTLE
Q	CHAFF AND FLARES	PAGE DOWN	DECREASE THROTTLE

COCKPIT VIEW	OUTSIDE VIEW	TOWER VIEW	GROUND VIEW

WEAPON VIEW	CHASE VIEW	WEAPON CHASE VIEW	SHIP VIEW

STOP PLAYBACK

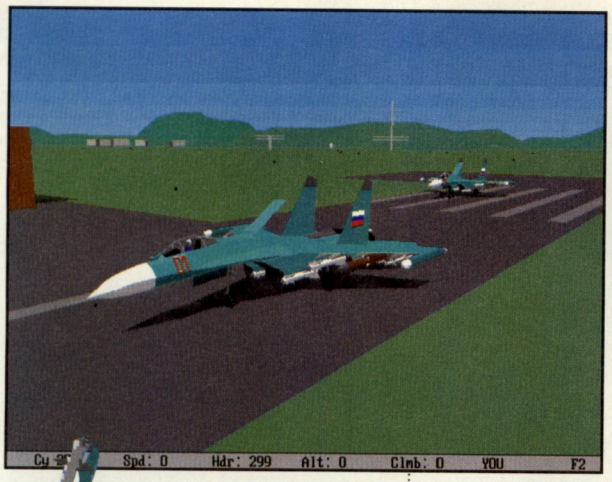
1 NAVIGATION MODE	2 DVB MODE	3 CLOSE AIR COMBAT	4 AIR TO GROUND	5 MISSILE AIMING	6 HELMET MODE					- MFD ZOOM OUT	+ MFD ZOOM IN	DEL WINGMAN ATTACK

SU-27

This keyboard template has been created by *PC Zone* for purchasers of the game *SU-27*, published by *Mindscape*. It is not approved or endorsed in any way by *Mindscape*.
All rights recognised.

A ACTIVE JAMMING	S PRO-GRAMING		F FLAPS	G GEAR	H STABILIS ATION		K PUGACHEV'S COBRA	L DUMP FUEL	; EOS SCAN UP					

Z RUDDER LEFT	X RUDDER RIGHT	C ENABLE CANNON		B AIR BRAKE		M MASTER WARNING	SPACEBAR FIRE CURRENT WEAPON	, EOS SCAN LEFT	. EOS SCAN DOWN	/ EOS SCAN RIGHT			





(Right) Once you get used to them the graphics are actually rather super... it's also the first example of this sort of thing running under Windows 95.

looks too. You get the normal padlock view of a locked target, with or without the helmet-mounted sight, and you get all the added benefits of using that with latest generation missiles. In case you weren't aware, that means that you can lock up the enemy when he isn't even in front of you, and engage him way outside normal firing parameters. Of course, you also get the IRST system known and loved by MiG29 pilots, which means a BVR lock without the other guy even knowing you are there.

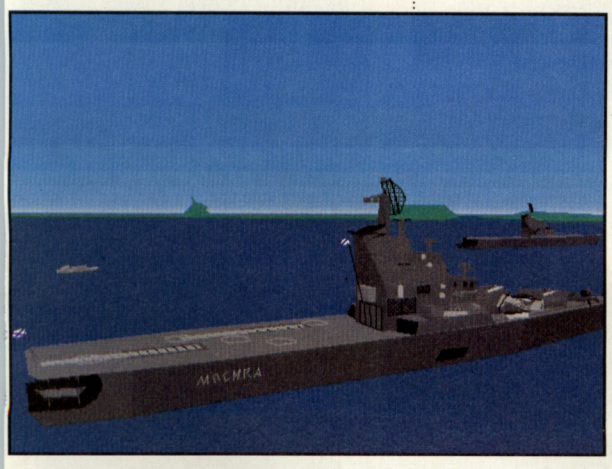
None of this is particularly different though, although it is better executed than most of its rivals. What really sets this apart is the level of detail to which the project team must have gone to get things so right. There is a table of essential and non essential parts which can be given a mean time between failures for the campaign or set to default, or turned off if you are feeling chicken. When you fire the cannon, the aircraft bucks. If you drop bombs you actually lurch slightly upward on release. If you fire a missile the aircraft pulls slightly to one side until you fire a second to even up the drag. In short, the frills are all you could ever need for a proper simulator.



So don't sit on the fence, what do you reckon?

Well, the lack of a network or even serial link multi-play facility is a disappointment, and will ultimately affect the long-term appeal of the product. Despite that, though, this is at least as good a flight sim as *Flight Unlimited*, and you get to shoot at things too. The graphics are nothing to write home about, and to be honest if you were raised on a diet of *Strike Commander, Fleet Defender* and *TFX*, you will be unimpressed by the visuals. But I urge you... no, I implore you – get in and fly the sucker. If you have any soul whatsoever, inside a minute you will be won over by the sheer brilliance of the flight model and the aircraft dynamics. If you're into real simulation, this has to be the one for you. If you want action, love flight sims but only have a lower spec PC, this will be fine. If you want to run Windows 95 (and indeed, why not?) this works a treat. Bottom line? Buy it and read the manual, then just enjoy it for what it is. You will not be disappointed. **Z**

(Below) Even the ships are modelled pretty accurately. Again, no texture maps, but who cares?



Tech specs

Version reviewed: Windows 95
Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX2/66
Hard Disk Space: 8Mb
Graphics: SVGA (VESA/PCI recommended)
Sound: All Windows 95 sound cards
Controls: Joystick, keyboard, mouse

Score

95

Add a network and I'll give it a top score of 100. At least.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Mindscape
Tel: 01444 246333

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."



(Top row, left to right)
Defender: The greatest shoot 'em up ever – it will never be beaten.
Robotron 2084: One of the fastest shoot 'em ups around. Single screen, really simple graphics. The arcade machine had two joysticks: one for moving and one for your gun.
Stargate: Defender 2: The second greatest shoot 'em up of all time. It scrolls, it has loads of features, it's major league spooge-worthy.

(Bottom row, left to right)
Joust: One of the best two-player games available. Single screen again, you sit on a flying ostrich thing and jump on people's heads. Top stuff.
Bubbles: Weird. Set in a sink, you move around picking things up. The worst graphics of the bunch but remarkably playable.
Sinistar: A scrolling asteroids thing, in colour. More than just shooting, you have to collect crystals as well.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

Arcade Classics

Remember the good ol' days? When men were real men, women were real women and games were real games? John Davison does, and is dead excited about the new CD from GTi.

AH, THE GOOD OL' DAYS... CHARACTER graphics, weird gurgly sound effects and gameplay from god's very own genitals. Sod your texture-mapped-polygons and poncey Gouraud shading, the early '80s were where it's at for blasting small, oddly shaped, brightly coloured character graphics into sparkly smithereens.

Arcade Classics from GT Interactive is a celebration of some of the finest games from this golden age. Featuring six different Williams arcade machines, this is possibly one of the most playable 'retro' games packages around. Unlike products such as Microsoft's *Arcade*, *Arcade Classics* has been produced using a very different approach. Rather than just coding something very close to the original, the chaps at Williams have produced an arcade machine emulator and simply taken all of the original arcade code and stuck it on the CD.

So whaddya get? *Joust* (cue tumultuous applause), *Bubbles* (cue slight indifference but mild interest), *Sinistar* (cue look of bewilderment followed by surprise that you actually remember it), *Robotron 2084* (cue intense jumping up and down), *Stargate: Defender 2* (cue intense spooging), and finally – wait for it – *Defender* (cue the biggest puddle of spooge you have ever seen in your entire life, complete with fireworks, grunting, groaning and much pleasure). What more could you want, eh? Okay, you may not know them all, but from the reaction it's gathered here, the £29.99 asking price is worthy of *Defender* alone.

This really is an excellent package and of all of the 'retro' packs, I would imagine that this would be the most popular. Forget your Atari VCS Windows 95 nonsense, this is the thing to have. Obviously it's going to appeal to people who were actually playing these things back in 1985 or whatever, but there are a lot of us about. "It's so bloody hard!" seems to be the one thing that everyone acknowledges. Yeah, yeah, the graphics look awful on absolutely all of them, but it's the gameplay that counts. *Joust* is still one of the best two-player games around. It looks naff, but sitting on an ostrich and jumping on people's heads is just incredibly satisfying! **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 386 and above
Hard Disk Space: 4Mb
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, joystick, gamepad

Score

90

Worthwhile for an arcade-perfect version of *Defender.*

Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: GT Interactive
Tel: 0171-258 3791

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MAC CD-ROM: Macintosh or 100% Compatibles, 68040 or PowerPC processor, System 7.1 or later, RGB colour display (640x480, thousands of colours) and 8Mb RAM. QuickTime 2.0 and Sound Manager 3.0 included.
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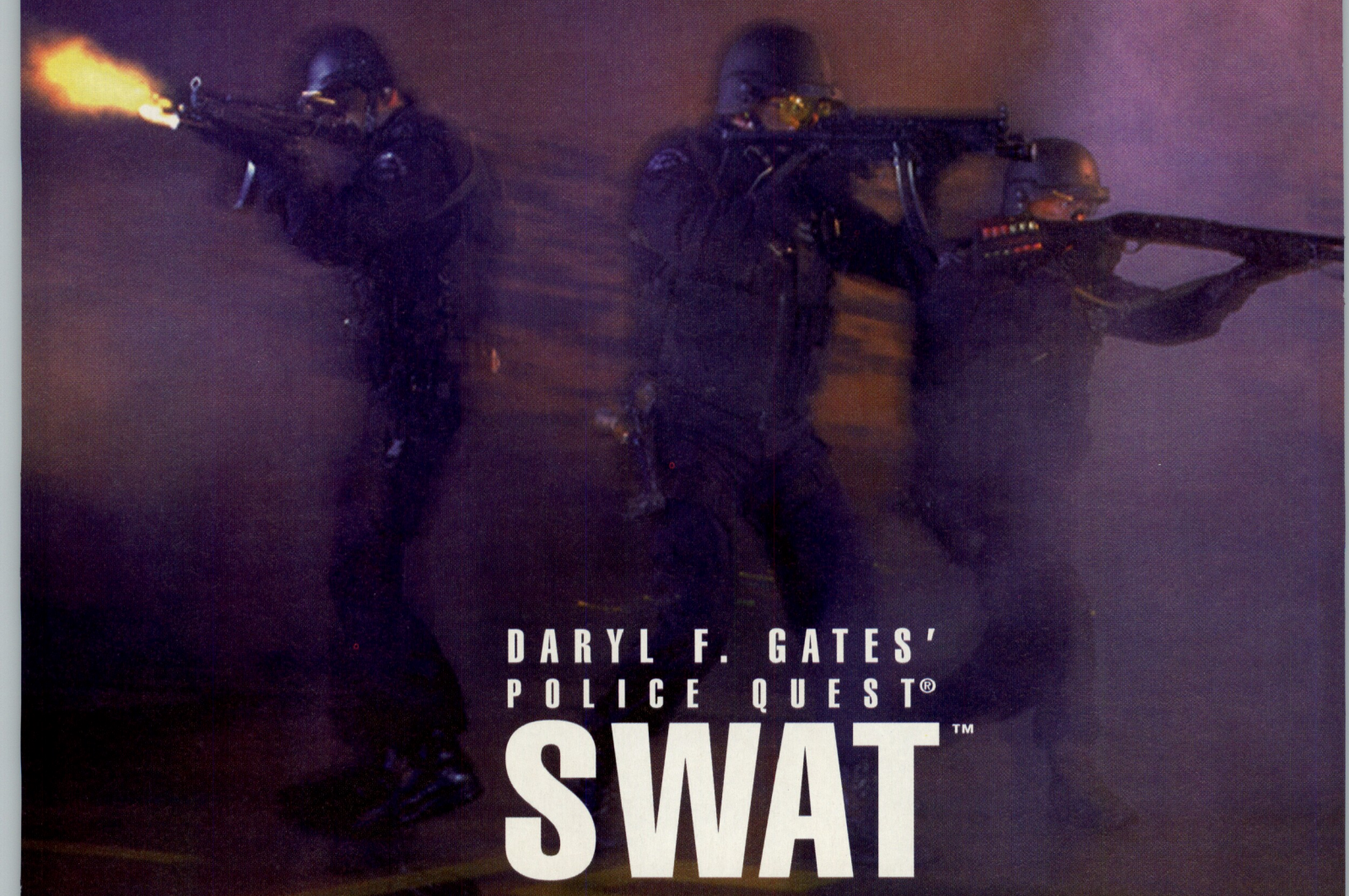
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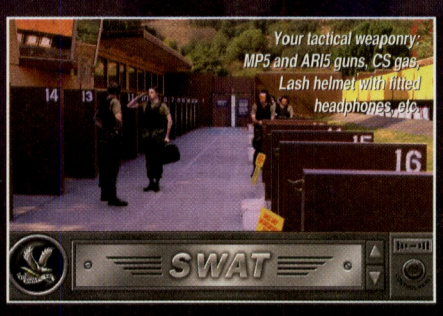
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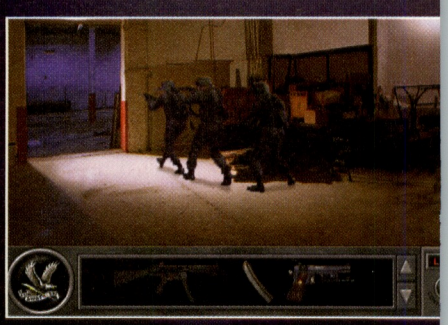
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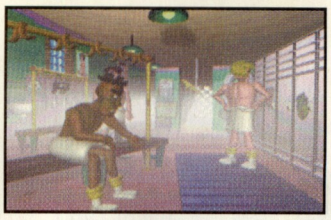
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Sensible World Of Soccer

It's soccer. It features teams from all over the world. And it's from Sensible Software. Patrick McCarthy perfects the sensible introduction.

"...And it came to pass that on the seventh day God didst look about him at the empty lands and didst say unto himself: Let There Be Sensi. And lo! There camest unto the land a creature that wath like no other, almost a veritable god itself. And it wath called Sensi Bul-Soqqa. And there wath rejoicing among the underclasses, who didst worship it, yea, though it were a chick with huge breast implants or something. And there wath weeping among rival software companies. And shares in joystick companies didst skyrocket..."

Dawwen; II, xi, 23-29; The Book of Sensi

IT'S OVER A YEAR AGO THAT WE RAN A *Blueprint* on *Sensible World Of Soccer*. Just think how much has happened in the world in the interim: our glorious Prime Minister resigned for a few days; the French decided to re-design the gene pool in the South Pacific; and Gary Neville mysteriously became a better player than Rob Jones; while the sweeping tide of mighty world events ebbed and flowed, while old people in local newspapers 'fell asleep' and were replaced by 'little ones', while all our lives were enriched no end by the coming of the TV adaptation of *Pride And Prejudice*, the finest minds at Sensible Software were busily working, working, working, on the PC version of their finest creation.

And now it's here, and it's exactly the sodding same as the Amiga version. Well, all right... they've added some animated cut scenes. Obviously, we'd much rather they spent time and money doing this than expending any effort on improving the game, and they've made a very wise decision. And the matches have 'commentary' – a collection of intermittently bellowed clichés that do nothing for the game whatsoever. All the latest major football releases, both arcade and management, have featured commentary by famous commentators that adds something to the atmosphere. Sensible has done it on the cheap, and badly.

But other than that, it's the same game: there's a player-manager career option, with teams from virtually every league in the world. Unfortunately you can only play it in single player mode. In multi-player mode, all the previous versions' competitions are back, with European Championships, World Cups, etc, and customisable leagues and cups which allow you to combine teams from anywhere in the world.

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 386DX
Hard Disk Space: Minimal
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Joystick



(Below left) The team set-up screen is very comprehensive and allows you to develop detailed tactics and set plays.

(Below) Look familiar? The only real 'improvement' here is a rotating 'S' in the corner of the screen and the cutesy crowd.



Big deal. There are three main problems with the game: the good teams are far too fast, it looks crap nowadays and the management side is token, to say the least. You can design formations and trade players, but it's hardly *Championship Manager*. We can forget the once-cherished idea of the perfect combination of management and arcade game. It'll never work. And *Sensible Soccer* itself has had its day. This is a one-year-old game, which was surviving on its gameplay even then. It's been superseded. Z

"...And God didst see that the one who wath called Sensi had been spilling his seed upon the ground for far too long. "Hey, tosser," spaketh the Lord, "Stop wanking around and do something worthwhile." But the creature didst merely laugh a hideous laugh and speed up a bit. So the Lord banished it to the Land of Fondly Remembered Games. Then didst he snatch from its greasy grasp the Magickal Ankh of Splendid Football Software, and gave it to someone else..."

Dawwen; III, vii, 12-19; The Book of Actua

Score

60

Too little, too late – too bad!

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Warner Interactive
Tel: 0171-391 4318

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PC ZONE CLASSIC

Actua Soccer

Patrick McCarthy and *Actua Soccer*. One's very good at what it does. Can you guess which one?



(Right) The motion captured players both look and move quite superbly. It's pretty quick too, even in hi-res mode.

IT SEEMS LIKE IT WAS ONLY YESTERDAY that Andy Cole was the one centre forward that Terry Venables simply had to pick for the England team. Now, just a few short months later, it's Les Ferdinand. Which seems to indicate that all you have to do is join the much-hyped Geordie funsters to become the best centre forward in the land, and have the press howling on your behalf.

Similarly, it seems like only yesterday that the majority of the computer games press were howling about how the cross-format advent of *FIFA Soccer* was only slightly less world-shattering an event than the second coming of the Messiah. And yet this year, nobody seems to give a stuff about the latest version of *FIFA*. One reason for this is *International Superstar Soccer*, a game on the SNES which pissed all over the first version of *FIFA*, and which has just been released in a Deluxe, mega ninja bastard version that makes it the finest football game on the planet bar none and wraps up the console market, in one fell swoop consigning every other console football game to oblivion (a town in Ecuador).

In the PC area, though, for all the fuss generated by some of the games released over the last year or so, there was still very little choice: *Sensible Soccer*, with its occasionally dodgy scrolling, its distinctly retro graphics but simple and appealing gameplay, or *FIFA*, with its lush visuals, scrolling that simply couldn't keep up with the action and players who took your input, via the control device, as a starting point for negotiation rather than an absolute command. But now, finally, the PC has a decent football game to call its own – and *Actua Soccer* is that game.

(Below) At last – a game with an intelligent control system. When the arrow flashes you're in range to shoot, when it's square you can square it into the box, and when it's a star you can do a first touch move. Simple and effective. A good thing.

(Right) There are eight different preset camera angles, but you can basically move the 'camera' wherever you like – especially good for replays. This is a very good thing.





Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb (8Mb for commentary)
Processor: 486DX
Hard Disk Space: 21Mb (minimum)
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Excited gasps

Well, there's no point in dragging the thing out, is there? *Actua Soccer* is the best football game currently available on the PC. That's that, really. You don't even have to bother reading the rest of this review if you don't want to.

Details, details

There's no one thing that makes it the best – it's a combination of factors. The graphics are good and the pitch swirls about to smoothly frame the action as you play, thanks to more cameras than the average outside broadcast unit. They don't blow your mind, they just do the job very well. The outfield players are based on motion-captured animations of Andy Sinton (don't let the idea of playing with teams made up of Frank Skinner lookalikes put you off) and Graham Hyde (which explains some of the tackles) while the goalkeepers are based on Chris Woods. (Insert your own Chris Woods joke here – try something along the lines of them never coming off the line, or letting in last minute goals in Cup Finals, or something like



(Left) Players tend to move into space well, mark the opposition, get into the box and so on, which means you're encouraged to pass the ball, use your wingers and develop some kind of tactics.
You can also make two kinds of tackle – stick your boot in or an all out sliding tackle, but time it right or you may see red. And when receiving long passes you need to control the ball before you do anything with it – Tony Adams take note.

that.) Obviously, they had to get Messrs Sinton and Hyde to pretend they know what to do after scoring a goal for the celebration scenes, which is why they don't quite have the ring of authenticity.

Anyway, there are stacks of pre-set camera angles, including a good old isometric view, for you to watch the game from, some of which move automatically to frame the action. Most of them can also be adjusted up and down or zoomed in or out with the keypad. If none of these are quite right for you, however, there's also a very handy customisable one. When you combine the available camera angles with home stadia that differ from team to team, pitches that look different according to the weather conditions, and even a proper sky for you to gaze at during moments of solitary reverie, you can see that there are no problems on the graphics front.

Barry Davies: England's Number One

The sound is equally good. First of all there's the commentary, provided by the admirable Barry Davies. There are those who prefer John Motson, but then there are also people who like to buy their clothes in their local Woolworths and drink Carling Black Label. The majority of right-thinking people agree that Mr Davies is far and away the best commentator in the country – if nothing else, at least you get an opinion from him from time to time, and he



The network option

Actua boasts a network option, with the facility for 20 human players to take control of a player each (the goalies are always controlled automatically). This is, frankly, nothing short of a licence for petty vindictiveness, an invitation to mayhem and a complete laugh. It's entirely up to you whether or not you want to play 'properly', staying in position and waiting for a decent pass, or just pile into a general free-for-all and turn it into the computer equivalent of The Wall Game. And it's guaranteed to bring back those childhood insecurities, either wondering whether or not you'll be picked last, or how you're going to avoid picking the kid with the limp and the patch over one eyeglass on his spectacles without hurting his feelings.

Get your seats out for the lads



Each stadium in the game has its own layout, with different arrangements of seating and tiers. Some even have rows of empty seats. Presumably the two teams involved don't have the pulling power to get those fans through the gates, despite showing pornographic films of Jennifer Ehle and the puppy from the Andrex advert at half-time. What the stadia all share, though, is a bloody great video wall in one corner of the ground, placed there especially to show any controversial match incidents again and again until the crowd are driven into a frenzy at the injustice of it all, storm the pitch, and shoot the offending referee in the head with a revolver, in scenes that hark back to the worst excesses of the Vietnam war. This doesn't happen very often, though. Anyway, here we can see the magnificent Priestfield Stadium, home of the mighty Gills, in all its glory. If you put your ear close to the page you should just about be able to hear the crowd indulging in a spot of community singing. You should find that the song in question is the traditional 'Who's the bastard in the black?'.



(Above) Each player has their own stats and is individually rated (as is each team). National squads are pretty accurate – ie choose Spain if you're rubbish, England if you feel like a challenge.





(Above right) The goal keepers are a bit crap, but that does mean you can score some pretty spectacular goals.

doesn't suck up to the big clubs.

Needless to say, his commentary is the best of any arcade game, and is made more realistic for being slightly less event-driven than most: you get little whimsical asides and all-purpose comments scattered between the descriptions, which add a lot more authenticity to it all. But I should just mention the one little problem I found with the commentary – when you substitute someone in a game, you don't expect to hear their name again in the commentary afterwards. Still, eh?

The crowd noises, too, are good and go a long way to add that all important element, atmosphere. Excitement builds with the action and even really crap shots draw a collective "Aaaaaaaaagh!" of contempt. You can virtually hear them burping up their pre-match beer, chewing their cold, non-specific meat pies and sputtering their tepid Bovril up their noses when you decide to drop your virtual shorts and show them your Harley Davidson tattoo. *(Blimey! It really must be bloody good! – Ed.)*

Options

As far as the variety of gameplay goes, *Actua Soccer* doesn't have as much to offer as some games, with nothing but national teams to choose from. Still, at least they're comprised of real players. There are league and Cup options, and of course friendlies. The league offers a fair degree of longevity, with the 44 teams being divided into three leagues depending more or less on world seedings (Brazil, Germany, Italy and the like in League A, England in League B, etc), with promotion and relegation at the end of each season.

Imperfections

It isn't perfect, though. There are a few minor faults that need working on, and hopefully the next version (if there is one) will do something about them. Firstly, the computer selects the player nearest the ball automatically for you. This isn't an unheard-of control method in a football game, but this particular example needs a bit of work: it's very frustrating when you want to make a tackle and the control flicks back and forth between two different players so you can't commit yourself with either.

Control-U-Like

In contrast to *FIFA*, which has 38 different key or button-combinations and virtually needs the combined digital dexterity of a touch typist and a harpist just to get someone to make a pass, *Actua* is controlled entirely with various combinations of just two buttons. That's not to say that the game's simplistic: using artful combinations of the two buttons, you can do everything from dummy passes and curved shots to kicking taxi drivers' doors in and copping off with chicks with really, really long fingernails. And unlike some games, it actually encourages you to play in a close-passing style that would please even Cloughie himself.

There's also a problem with the "first time" facility. Basically, you can press a button in advance of receiving the ball and your player will hit a shot or pass first time. Unfortunately though, it's not entirely unknown for a button press intended for another player to 'carry over' to the next one, causing them to do something disastrous when you can least afford them to. And the goalies never really seem comfortable with shots that bounce on or about the six-yard line. (Obviously they're big men who seem to have trouble getting down to the low ones, which is what happens when you pick Chris Woods.) It's almost like they're just too busy being well-animated to move quickly enough to make the save.

Still, musn't grumble

But these things are but minor irritants when compared to the fact that the PC finally has a graphically strong, aurally entertaining and very playable arcade football game. No seriously, it has. Honest. Try it and see if we're wrong. Z



(Right) Presentation is top class – the menu system is easy to use. the commentary is brilliant, and even the music (a kind of Lightening Seeds rip off) is pretty fab.

Score

92

Without doubt the best footie game on the PC to date – a real *FIFA* beater.

Price: £TBA **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
Tel: 01142 753423

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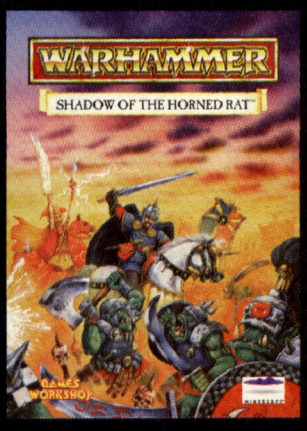
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Wipeout

"Why pout? Because sometimes merely sulking isn't enough," said Patrick McCarthy, trying to get out of making the tea again.

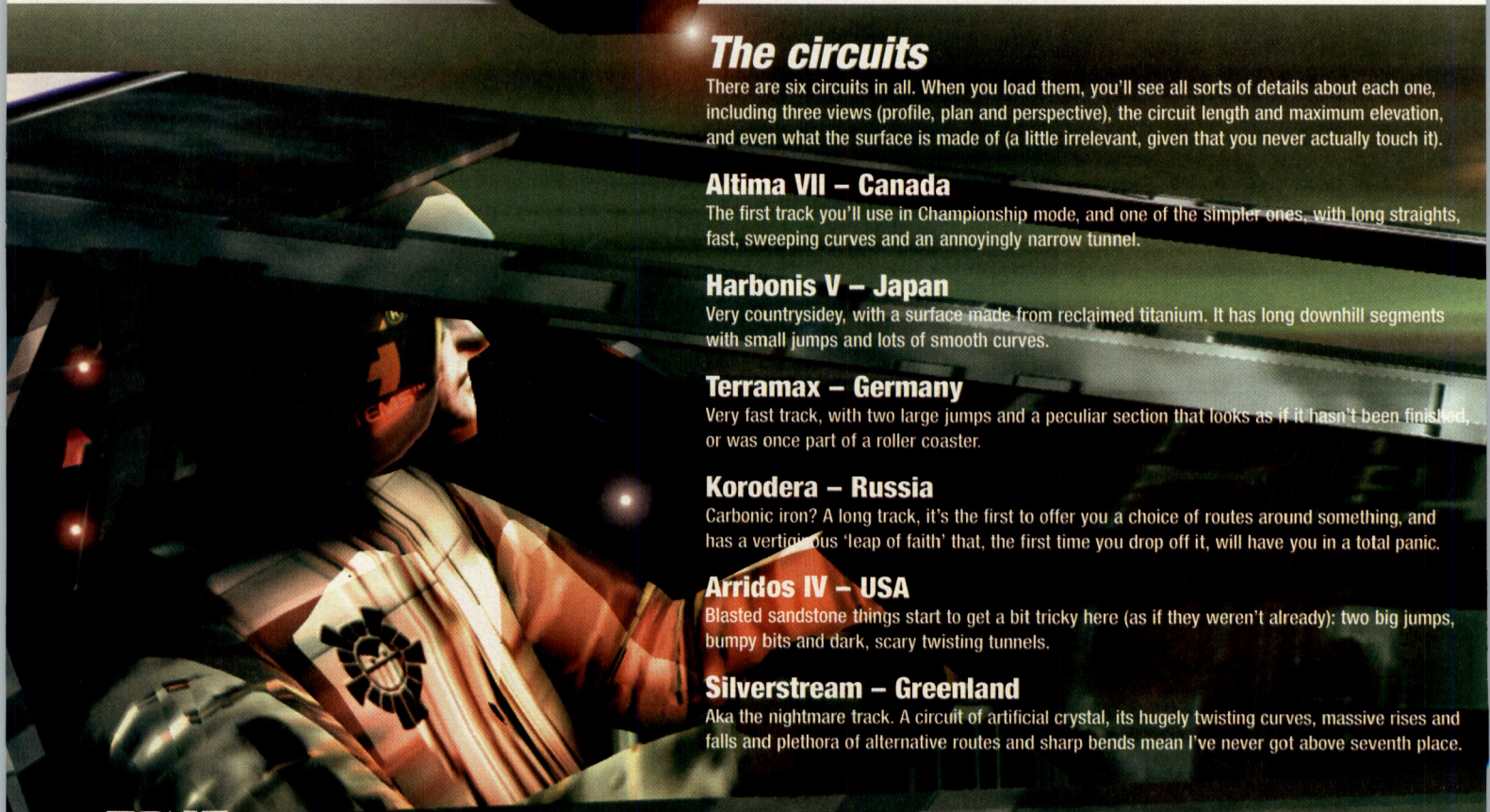
One or two of you – not many more, admittedly – may well have heard of a new games platform called the PlayStation. And on that platform you might just have heard of a game called *Wipeout*. No? Well, that's probably because it's quite an obscure game. I mean it's not as if you could just walk into any games shop in the country and see it being played on big screens by hordes of screaming brats, or anything. It's not even as if several million of you are probably gagging to play this game after seeing it on the PlayStation. *(Yes it is – Ed.)* Ah. I knew it was something like that.

Scenario alert

It's 2052 AD, and the world's most popular sport – more popular than the Olympics and the World Cup, it says here – is anti-gravity racing. Now, if this involved watching people running down corridors in outer space trying to crap into a floating bucket, I might believe it, but anti-gravity racing with floating cars? Nah. Minority sport.

Anyway, these ships have been developed despite obstruction from corrupt governments eager to push expensive petrol at people, and anti-gravity machines have become the answer to everyone's travel prayers as well as excellent ways to tear about at dangerous speeds. To sum up then: hovery racing game, six tracks, four types of craft; stuff to shoot at people, bits on the track to speed you up. Blah blah. Yackety yackety.





The circuits

There are six circuits in all. When you load them, you'll see all sorts of details about each one, including three views (profile, plan and perspective), the circuit length and maximum elevation, and even what the surface is made of (a little irrelevant, given that you never actually touch it).

Altima VII – Canada

The first track you'll use in Championship mode, and one of the simpler ones, with long straights, fast, sweeping curves and an annoyingly narrow tunnel.

Harbonis V – Japan

Very countrysidey, with a surface made from reclaimed titanium. It has long downhill segments with small jumps and lots of smooth curves.

Terramax – Germany

Very fast track, with two large jumps and a peculiar section that looks as if it hasn't been finished, or was once part of a roller coaster.

Korodera – Russia

Carbonic iron? A long track, it's the first to offer you a choice of routes around something, and has a vertiginous 'leap of faith' that, the first time you drop off it, will have you in a total panic.

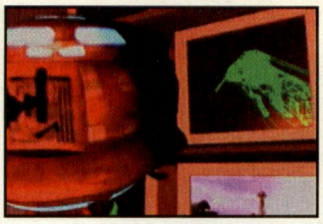
Arridos IV – USA

Blasted sandstone things start to get a bit tricky here (as if they weren't already): two big jumps, bumpy bits and dark, scary twisting tunnels.

Silverstream – Greenland

Aka the nightmare track. A circuit of artificial crystal, its hugely twisting curves, massive rises and falls and plethora of alternative routes and sharp bends mean I've never got above seventh place.







There's a Championship mode (race the other seven pilots, get in the first three to continue on each track) which, if you win, allows you to play at the harder level; or you can have one-off races and time trials.

Control freaks

Let's get the moans out of the way, shall we? Basically, it's a bloody hard game even at the easier of the two levels. For a start, opposing computer-controlled craft are extremely aggressive; they try to block your passage (oo-er) by running you into walls, pushing you off the racing line and out of the way of the power-up grids. And true to the tradition of all driving games, when they hit you, you stall or spin upside down, while they whizz away unharmed.

Then there's the tracks: they're fiendishly designed and take a long time to get used to. Often, the only way to get around some of the corners is to use your air-brakes. Merely banking the craft

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2/66

Hard Disk Space: Minimal

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All sound cards

Controls: Joystick, keyboard, mouse, joypad





(Left) Suddenly, Trevor remembered he was dying to go to the toilet.

(Below left) Shouldn't there be a road surface around here somewhere?

(Below) Tracks, and people racing on them.











Sexy chicks and hunks

There are four racing teams in the game, each of which has a snazzy (or duff) logo and two pilots, each of whom has their own little logo and about whom you're given more personal details than anyone really has a right to know. Especially as they don't make the slightest bit of difference to your success or failure in the game. All we can say for certain is that Arial Tetsuo, the Halo Jones lookalike and number one pilot of the Auricom Research Team, has every chance of being popular with sad, lonely computer gamers everywhere.

Rocket ship

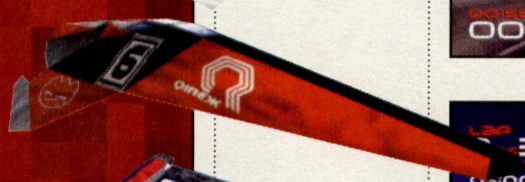
Four different teams compete in the championships, each with two anti-gravity racers to their name. Like all racing games, you have all the usual choices between good top speed but poor acceleration, etc. In the manual, someone's actually been paid to sit down and make up a load of garbage about how many engines they use and of what type, exactly how they make those fuel-flow pipes work quicker than anyone else's, and how they hide their computer-controlled braking systems in the drivers' bottoms. But this is all you really need to know.



AG systems
Excellent acceleration, average top speed, average weight, good manoeuvrability.



Auricom
Average acceleration, good top speed, very heavy, average manoeuvrability.



Qirex
Poor acceleration, excellent top speed, heavy, poor manoeuvrability.



Feisar
Good acceleration, poor top speed, lightweight, excellent manoeuvrability.



»

isn't enough. Which is all very well on the PlayStation with its ergonomically-perfect, eight button controllers. But on a PC, you're restricted to using a mouse, keyboard or a joystick. The designers haven't made allowances for four-button joypads, never mind six-button SNES-style pads. Which means that you have to use a controller in conjunction with a couple of keyboard keys. This, to put it mildly, is crap – with racing craft that handle like boats rather than cars, you need all the help you can get.

Shall I compare thee to a PlayStation game?

Alright then. The PlayStation version of this game is a fine example of a texture-mapped polygon-o-rama that fairly whizzes along. The tracks are varied, with moody lighting, big fake adverts and even roaring crowds. Controls are precise, but they take a good deal of getting used to.

The PC version looks a bit sad in contrast, with fewer colours and far rougher graphics, and the controls leave a lot to be desired. Admittedly, the tracks scroll smoothly considering how much work the poor old processor has to do – but I'm afraid it doesn't compare to the PlayStation version, and if you play it on anything less than a Pentium, you can kiss even the PC version's smoothness and the graphical details goodbye. This means that when it boils down to it, you might as well opt for something like *Slipstream 5000*. **Z**





Score

78

Don't buy this expecting to get the PlayStation version of the game.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Sony Interactive
Tel: 0151 282 3000

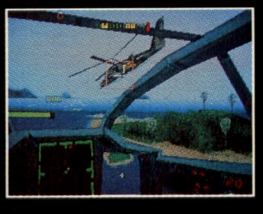
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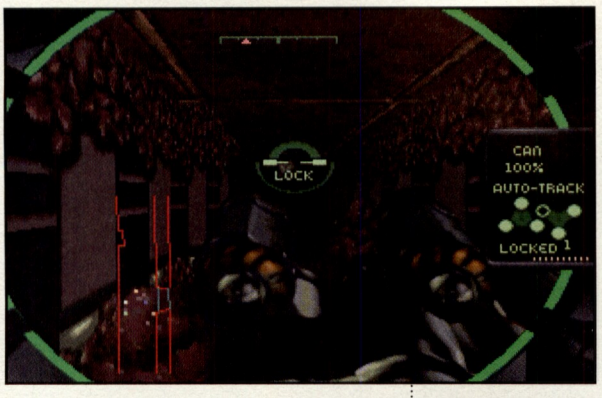
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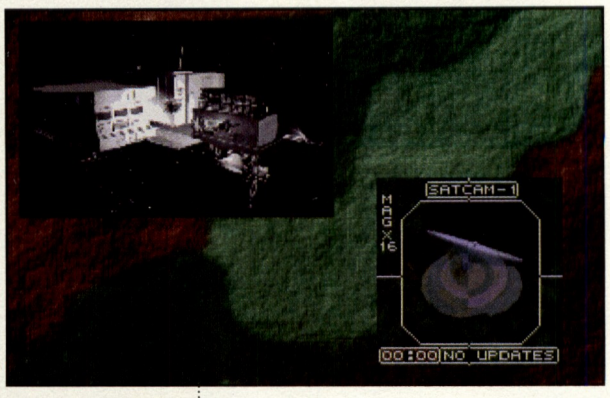
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Mortal Coil

Doom clone number 1287 is about to hit the streets. Chris Anderson is totally underwhelmed.







(Above) Not only is this game incredibly tacky, it's sexist to boot.

(Above centre) The graphics in *Mortal Coil* are, well, what can I say? Just plain ugly.

(Above right) Mission briefing time. This is your last chance to change your mind and go play a decent game instead.

THIS IS A VERY STRANGE GAME indeed. It basically involves shooting everything you see from a 3D perspective, so at first glance it seems to be nothing more than yet another *Doom* clone. However, the developers seem to be keen to point out that the game has a very strong strategic element and is not to be dismissed as a simple shoot 'em up.

Well, it's certainly true that *Mortal Coil* has a lot more features than your average shoot 'em up. For example, you get to control four fighters at once, sort of *Space Hulk*-style, except here it's from a 3D perspective, and you can give them waypoints on the playing area and send them off to explore places before you wade in. There are also driving missions in which your team zooms about in jeeps having a pop at all the aliens it comes across. There were things about the game I liked, and then things that absolutely drove me up the wall...

The high points

The use of four characters instead of one is certainly an original twist on what's fast becoming an extremely overcrowded genre. The levels are massive, each one containing several maps that need to be completed before going on to the next stage of the game. The driving missions are a welcome diversion from the seemingly endless walking around and blowing things up levels; it's obvious that the game's designers went to considerable lengths to ensure that *Mortal Coil* would be as different as it possibly could be to your average run-of-the-mill *Doom* clone. But unfortunately...

(Below) I think this guy's supposed to be scary. Just about says it all, really, doesn't it?



Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Hard Disk Space: 10Mb
Graphics: VGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Joystick, keyboard, mouse



The low points

The graphics are absolutely dreadful. The scenery wouldn't be out of place in the ghastly *Isle Of The Dead*, which set new standards of awfulness for 3D first-person perspective shoot 'em ups. The aliens look crap and seem to be trying to walk on the moon, while the voiceovers are incredibly corny – Candy, the female character, has a most annoying habit of telling the aliens that they "picked the wrong girl this time" in a fake cockney accent, as well as constantly informing you that she needs a hot shower. Even playing the game on a Pentium 90, the characters move around so sluggishly that you start to think that they're all either really old, really tired, or maybe even both.

To be quite honest, I really wanted to like this game. It sounded like a great idea on paper, but hasn't worked out at all in practice. With better graphics (hang on, make that *much* better graphics) and voiceovers that didn't make you laugh every time you heard them, *Mortal Coil* could have been a winner. As it stands, I doubt it will ever make me want to stay up late every night, unable to tear myself away. If you really want to play a first-person perspective action game, go for *Hexen* which is utterly fab. **Z**

Score

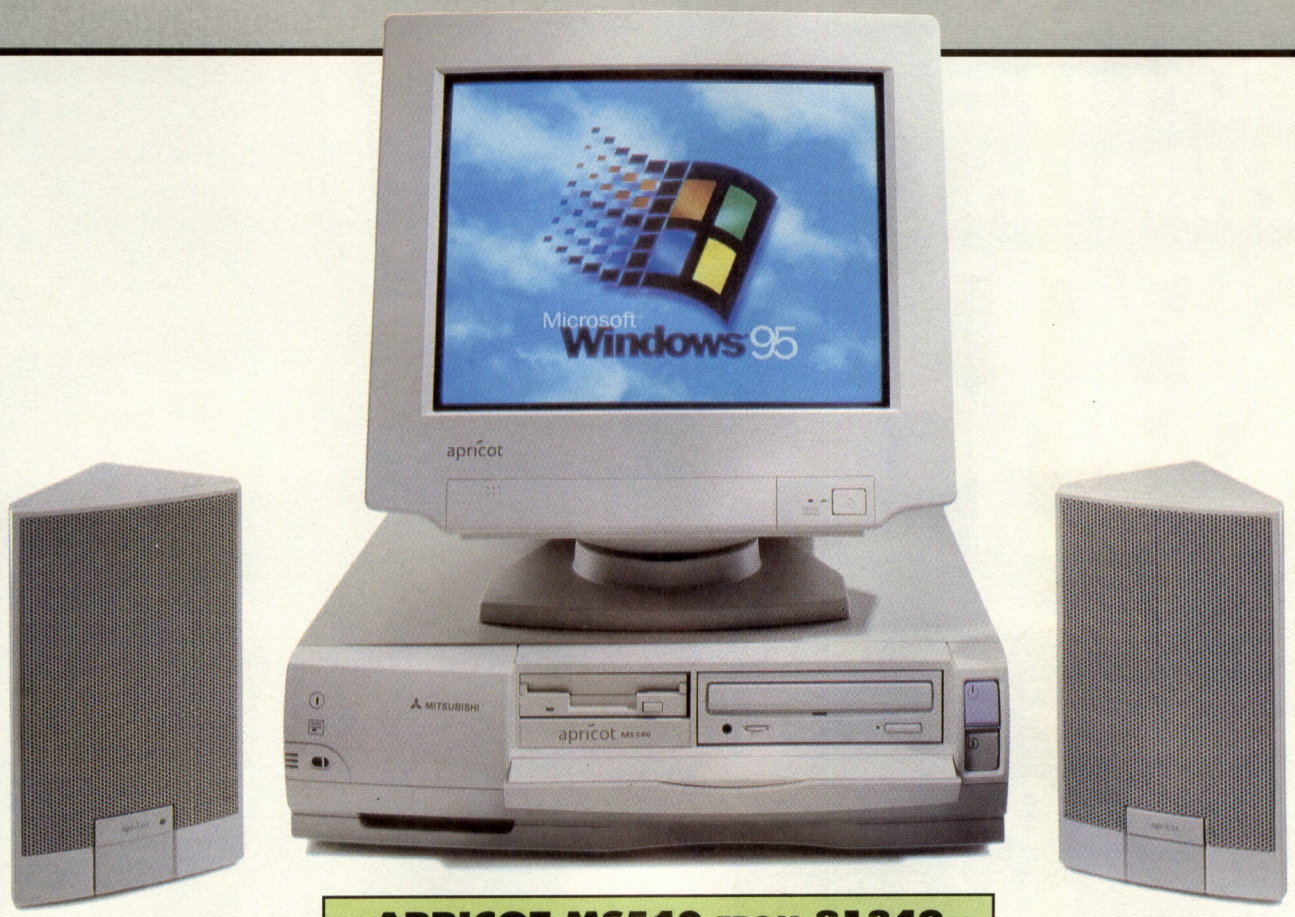
50

A great idea ruined by awful graphics and unimaginative presentation.

Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Vic Tokai/Virgin
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PC ZONE CLASSIC

Duncan MacDonald was going to pretend he misheard *IndyCar 2* as 'In De Car Too?' so that he could write an intro based on this 'hilarious' sitcom-esque mistake, adding a lame punchline like 'No, I'll go by bike' or something. But then he realised what a monumentally crap idea it was, so he didn't. *(Thank God – Ed.)*

IndyCar 2

BLUR MAY RECENTLY HAVE TAKEN ON lovable mop-heads *Oasis* (and lost as far as everyone but Blur is concerned), but in the world of PC racing car sims there's a fight that's been going on for considerably longer, and the outcome has yet to be decided. It's been the Yank programming team Papyrus versus our own home-grown Geoff Crammond in a contest that's lasted, on and off, for about five years. Maybe even six. I forget the exact dates.

"You can change the drivers' names, so now you can finally get rid of Al Unser Jr and replace him with, say, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, or even Gary Glitter."

If you're an old hand you'll know the story, so skip on a few paragraphs... but if you're a relative newcomer to the PC world, here's a quick history lesson.

A million years BC

Once upon a time, long ago in a world where everything was made of wood, and a top-notch PC was a 286/12MHZ job (really!), Papyrus dropped everybody's jaws with a racing car simulation called *Indianapolis 500*. There was only the one track, sure, but who cared, seeing as how you were able to drive around it the wrong way and smash head-on into oncoming traffic. Oh, and then watch the pile-up on a replay, and from several different angles to boot. Suddenly *Outrun*, *Powerdrift*, *Chase HQ* and their bitmapped ilk began to look more than a little tame. "*Indy 500* is amazing," said Mrs Dorothy Postlethwaite of Hull, in a letter to the *Daily Mail*. "You can even change your car set-ups and everything. The future has arrived at last!"

The Industrial Revolution

And the future was continuing to arrive apace over on the 16-bit formats of the Amiga and ST, thanks partly to a busy bloke called Geoff Crammond. *Stunt Car Racer* was just one of his games, a formidable futuristic car romp that somehow got completely ballsed up when it was converted to the PC. (So score one to Papyrus.) But then, a year later, the ubiquitous Crammond pulled a rather large feather out of his bottom in the form of a fully-fledged *Formula One Grand Prix* simulation. Not just one track, but 16. And, unlike *Indy 500*, they weren't ovals, no, they were 'proper'; 16-bit owners swooned akimbo, and then kaboom! *Grand Prix* was converted flawlessly to the PC. There was even a tincey wincey bit of texture-mapping added for powerful 386s. Mrs Dorothy Posthlewaite of Hull wrote again to the *Daily Mail:* "Pinch me and tell me it's not a dream," she said. "Now I know how to take Monaco's Mirabeau corner flat out in third."

The race into space

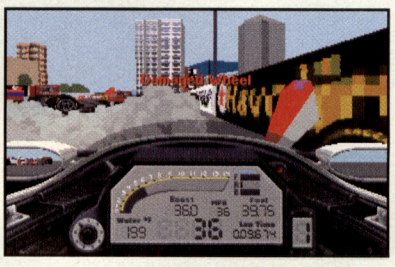
Grand Prix was to reign supreme for quite a time yet – it even received accolades from real Formula One drivers for its accuracy and attention to detail. But Papyrus, meanwhile, was plotting and scheming in a darkened shed somewhere in the States. "We're going to kick this Crammond geezer's arse from San Francisco to Dubuque, Iowa," they said. (Or something like that.) Cue *IndyCar*. An all-singing, all-dancing rehash of their previous hit. Eight tracks (mostly ovals) and texture-mapped graphics to die for... indeed there was an entry in the *Daily Mail*'s obituary column that month which read thus: *Mrs Dorothy Posthlewaite of Hull passed painlessly away in the early hours of yesterday morning. Her dying words were: "*IndyCar *is more than impressive. The driving model in Geoff Crammond's* Grand Prix*, by comparison, now seems a tad iffy. The centre of gravity's all wrong, and the crashes are all sort of, well, fluffy and inconsequential. A bit like clouds. Like clouds. Clouds. Oh look, there's an angel. And there's baby Jesus. And Noel Edmunds*. Raaaasssp!"*

*Wishful thinking.

Question Time with Jonathan Dimbleby

Mrs Postlethwaite's death was about three years ago... ish. Since then the debate has continued: who's the tops?

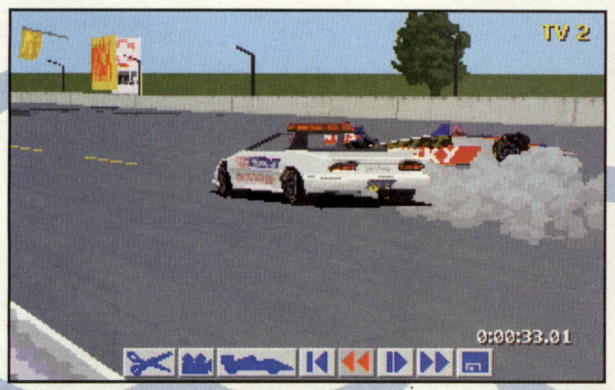






(Right) The game looks and feels noticeably better and runs around 70 per cent faster than *NASCAR* does in hi-res mode – but you'll still need a Pentium if you wanna turn all the detail up though.







(Above) You can record and play back your mishaps and view them from numerous angles. Crashes are now quite spectacular – bits fly off all over the show.

(Above right) The outside views give the game an arcade feel, but it's still bloody difficult.

(Crammond with his playability or Papyrus with its physics models and graphics?) And, also since then, Papyrus has released two upgrades for *IndyCar* (ie the tracks that should have been supplied with the original product). Oh, and the company's also released *NASCAR Racing*, but let's not confuse the issue.

So, a quick resume then. *Indianapolis 500* comes out. *Grand Prix* shits on it. *IndyCar* tries in turn to shit on *Grand Prix*, but ends up only giving it a punch in the mouth. Next step? The boy Crammond has to counter with a Thai Boxing manoeuvre, of course, and we're thus promised *Grand Prix 2* at the end of 1993. Then again at the beginning of 1994. Then at the end of 1994. It's now the end of 1995, and *Grand Prix 2* promises that it's really, really, honest guv, almost, almost ready.

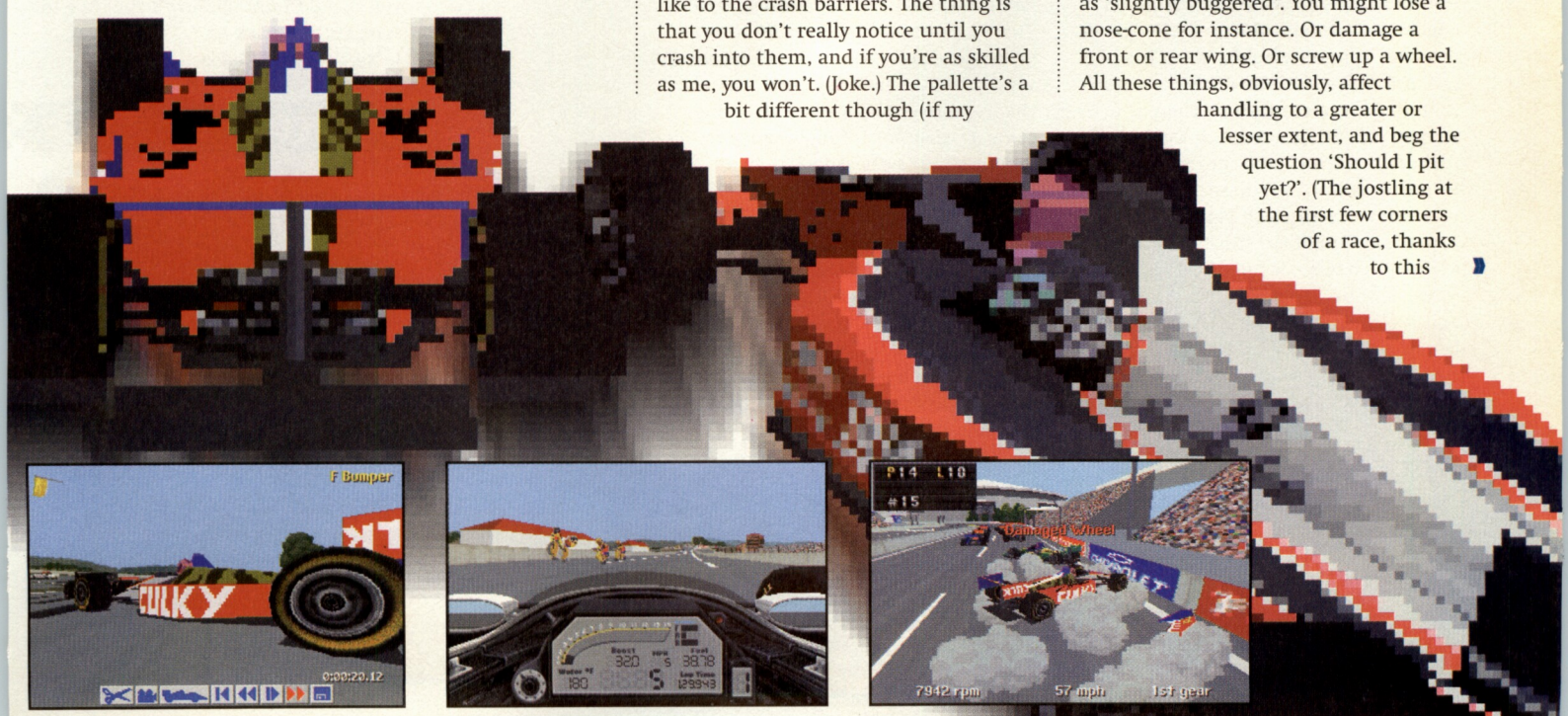
But *IndyCar 2* has made it first. So will Crammond and his team be left reeling with the blow? And should they abandon *F1GP2*, even though it's (honest guv) ready to ship? Let's see.

Blimey, It's the same game...

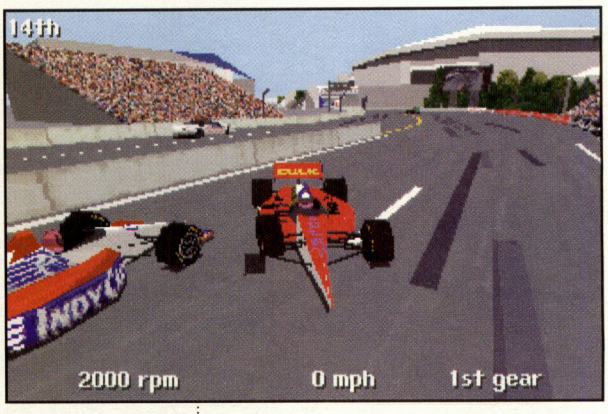
I don't know quite what I was expecting actually, but I know for sure that I was expecting, er, more than this. Take my word for it that your initial response to *IndyCar 2* will match mine. It looks virtually identical to the original *IndyCar*. Obviously the tracks are going to be the same shape and everything, because, um, they're the same tracks. Ditto for the cars. But nevertheless... you know what I mean? Maybe distant airliners flying overhead occasionally. Or flocks of birds. Or moving clouds and 'working' weather fronts or something. Yes, I'll admit that there *are* extra trackside details, such as parked camper vans and whatnot. And, as Jeremy reported in last month's *Blueprint*, there are other subtle graphic improvements, like to the crash barriers. The thing is that you don't really notice until you crash into them, and if you're as skilled as me, you won't. (Joke.) The pallette's a bit different though (if my memory serves), and the grass and trees and stuff look much nicer as a result. Deeper, fuller, somehow. In fact the Elkhart Lake track is now so picturesque it tends to make you want to pull over and have a picnic on it. Oh, and just a quick note on the sound: the SFX in *IndyCar 2* are much bigger and cleverer than those in its predecessor, and there's also a commentator on hand to tell you when you've crashed or been black flagged or whatever.

What's the damage, mate?

The driving model, which was always one of the main selling points of the original *IndyCar*, has actually been improved, which means that if you're hopeless you can expect to crash more often than ever before: a point that'll be driven home by all the 'comey off' bits on your car. In the original game your car would either be in full health or, after a shunt, completely buggered. In *IndyCar 2* it can also be in a state known as 'slightly buggered'. You might lose a nose-cone for instance. Or damage a front or rear wing. Or screw up a wheel. All these things, obviously, affect handling to a greater or lesser extent, and beg the question 'Should I pit yet?'. (The jostling at the first few corners of a race, thanks to this







(Above) "You can't park there, mate! That spot's reserved for women with small children!"

(Above left) You've got to be joking – look how fast he's going!

(Below left) All the tracks and the paint kit are thrown in this time round – they're just so generous at Papyrus.

« possible pico-damage, has never been so much fun/such a nightmare... delete as applicable). Oh, and as well as that, there's a realism option that allows you to select Engine Breakdowns: a semi-random type affair that'll please the sort of people who select the Dud Torpedoes option in submarine games.

A question of intelligence

Something else Jeremy reported in last month's *Blueprint* was the fact that the AI has been upped, and happily it's true – Papyrus wasn't telling him porkies. The cars in front do seem to 'make themselves wider' in an attempt to foil your overtaking lunges, but luckily also seem to try harder not to touch wheels when you're right beside them. They still don't pass the 'park sideways in the middle of the road' exam, though. (You end up with a line of stationary thickies to your left or right.)

Something that hasn't been changed, and that frankly surprises me, is that the computer-controlled cars still don't crash into each other, like never ever. Or even just spin off occasionally. They did in *F1GP*, which was one of the things that made it so enjoyable – there you were, trying in vain to catch the seemingly uncatchable car in front, and he'd suddenly do a Damon. No such pleasant surprises with Papyrus. Mind you, something it *has* stuck in is the ability to change all the drivers' names, so you can finally get rid of Al Unser Jr and replace him with, say, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, or Gary Glitter. Oh, and something else... you know how in *IndyCar 1* when you opted for no pace lap, the standing start was unfair? That's been sorted: still no red/green lights though.

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 486DX
Hard Disk Space: 8Mb
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Joystick, keyboard, mouse

And the rest...

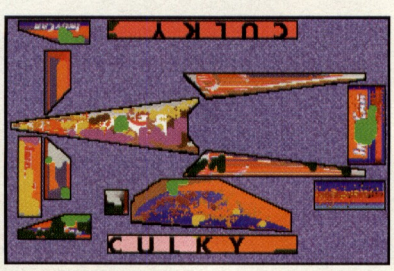
Select 'RAIN' from the options, and the track becomes slippy – but still no visual clues whatsoever. Boo! And no spray. Boo! However, this IndyCar version *does* come with all the season's tracks, so hooray for that at least. And it also comes with the Paint Kit, so you can customise the cars by writing rude words on them and so on. *(Child – Ed.)* There's a DOS version and a Windows 95 version, and though the Windows 95 version has a newly designed interface, the in-game gubbins are exactly the same as with DOS (though, purportedly, it runs a tad faster). So what about multi-player racing? Well, if your translation of 'multi' is 'two', and you've a couple of PCs and a serial cable, you'll be laughing your blinking head off. And SVGA? Hmmm, a bit of a slideshow at times, even if your computer's CPU title begins with a 'P' and has a high number after it. Lose detail and you'll struggle by, just – but having said that, it's much quicker than *NASCAR*, even with the out-of-car views. And that's about it, really. *IndyCar 2* is an ever-so-slightly souped up *IndyCar 1*.

But the question we were always going to arrive at is this: Crammond or Papyrus? Do you hold out for *F1GP2* or plump for *IndyCar 2*? And there's a supplementary question: if you've already got *IndyCar 1* (and a pound to a penny says you do), is this sequel sufficiently 'enhanced' to warrant its purchase... regardless of Crammond and his team's existence?

Answer one: If you already own a copy of *IndyCar 1*, and don't like throwing money about, then hold on for *F1GP2*.

Answer two: If you don't have *IndyCar 1* then yes, get *IndyCar 2* but – and this is 99.99% for certain – you'll also want to buy Crammond's effort as well. (So if you're a bit hard up, now's the time to start cutting back on fags, food, gas, leccy, drugs and booze.) Z





Score

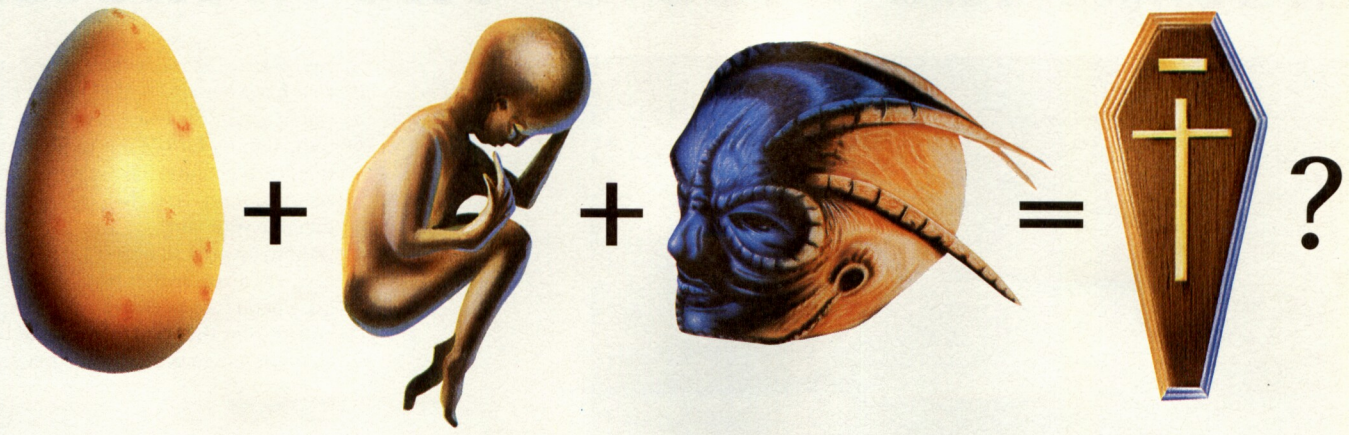
90

If you own the original *IndyCar*, remove 10 points from this score.

Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Papyrus/Virgin
Tel: 0171-368 2255

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THE KEY TO LIFE?

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Peter Smith
Strategy Plus

Gametek UK Limited, 258 Bath Road, Slough, Berks SL1 4DX, United Kingdom.

In the world of Baron von Frankenstein, the dead can be brought to life simply with the aid of a few dodgy crystals and a massive surge of electricity. In Charlie Brooker's case, re-animation is achieved with a few coffee granules and a surge of boiling water. But then again, Frankenstein was a genius, and Charlie's just a twat.

FRANKENSTEIN: Through The Eyes Of The Monster



IN THESE HEADY MODERN TIMES, IT'S possible for scientists to grow replacement body parts for use in transplant operations. A gruesome example (in fact the only example I can, er, think of) is that human ear they grew on the back of a mouse in America recently. Presumably, just around the corner lies the prospect of huge organ 'farms' – fields full of lungs, legs and livers watched over by straw-chewing Farmer Giles types. It's a pretty disgusting concept whichever way you look at it. Having grown up in the countryside, I can remember spending many teenage evenings at house parties where amorous couples would sneak off into the field at the back of the house and roll around in the corn together for a few tawdry moments. A little crushed vegetation seems to do wonders for the libido – I'm not entirely sure how romance could prosper should the lustful couple find themselves rolling around in a squelchy red mass of human flesh.

In *Frankenstein* (subtitled *Through The Eyes Of The Monster*), you play the part of a man framed for a crime he didn't commit – a grisly murder. As if this miscarriage of justice wasn't enough, the outraged locals took it upon themselves to string you up and then rip your body apart with their bare hands – a barbaric explosion of mob rule that would warm the heart of any Tory MP campaigning for the reintroduction of the death penalty. Having been wrongly accused, hung, and then dismembered, imagine your surprise at subsequently waking up on a slab in Frankenstein's castle to discover that your missing body parts have been replaced by 'spares' culled from the local morgue. And you thought hangovers were bad news.

Stitched up

This is where the game takes up the plot. But this isn't quite the traditional Frankenstein story. Far from it. You see, this time round, the monster (ie you) isn't content to simply wander about groaning, roaring, knocking things over and frightening the children. Nope – you've been revived with all your memories and intellect intact. The logical thing to do is to set about trying to clear your name. This won't be easy since anyone who sees you will spend more time screaming than listening to your pleas for justice. Things are further complicated by the attitude of Dr Frankenstein himself (played by Tim Curry), a hot-tempered mad scientist type who doesn't want his greatest creation to go around whinging about a mistrial. In fact, he'd rather shoot you

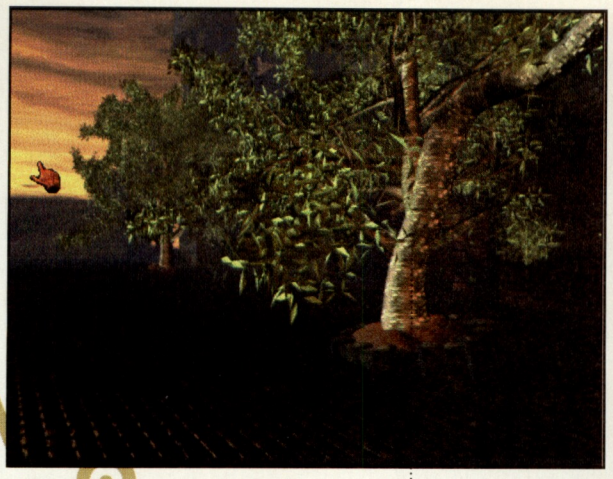
(Above left) Tim Curry turned dirty old flasher.

(Below left) Let me out of here, you bastards.

(Below right) Hmm... cogs and bits of metal looking suspiciously disjointed. Looks like it's puzzle time.









in the head than let you wander off into the village and show him up for the deranged nutcase he patently is.

What we have here is a fairly novel, glossily produced adventure, viewed from a first-person perspective. As you explore the castle and beyond you'll find yourself struggling with all manner of problems, ranging from traditional adventure game quandaries (mucking about with lengths of rope, etc), to grisly scientific experimentation (bringing cold lumps of meat back to life). The whole thing is backed with a commentary explaining your innermost thoughts – running the full gamut from outraged expressions of anguish ("That bastard! What has he done to me!", etc etc) to quasi-philosophical musings about the dividing line between life and death. Your attempts to escape the castle are consistently hindered by the wacky doctor, played with relish by Tim Curry. His performance as the snarling, shouting scientist is of a far higher quality than is the norm in this kind of thing, so hats off to him.

The puzzles themselves require quite a bit of head-scratching, and even experienced questers will take their time in arriving at the end of the game.

(Above left) You get to explore the areas around the castle as well as inside it.

(Above right) Some of the indoor scenes would not be out of place in a very expensive RPG. Perhaps they should have done that instead.

The storyline is cleverly structured, so that you begin the game without the foggiest idea about what you're actually supposed to do, but gradually work out some kind of definite plan. But despite its longevity, the sumptuous visuals, the decent performances and the novel ideas at work here, there's a catch.

Ah. The catch

And that catch is the interface. Now, maybe it's just me, but I found it bloody difficult to navigate my way through the locations. I'm not talking about the 'garden maze' section that crops up in the middle of the game (I think we're all fed up with poxy mazes in adventure games), I'm talking about navigating my way from *one side of a room to the other*. *Frankenstein* is a flick-screen affair, but offers plenty of different places to stand within each single location. The result was no doubt intended to make the castle and the rooms inside feel a bit more 'real' – in practice it's simply confusing. The very first room you'll explore, for instance, is actually a relatively small laboratory, but the multitude of viewpoints therein can make it seem like some kind of massive sprawling warehouse. Walking to a table in the corner and then back again won't be as simple as it sounds – each time you turn your head you'll find yourself looking at a familiar layout from a new angle, until eventually you don't have a clue where the hell you are. You'll probably spend as much time trying to get your bearings as you will solving puzzles. And that's a massive shame. It wound me up no end. Then again, perhaps it's just me being stupid.

This score then, reflects my reaction to the interface, and the interface alone. If things could be tweaked a little so that navigating your way around a single room was as simple as it should be, this would be a winner. As it stands, you could end up screaming in horror for reasons not intended by the programming team. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486SX/33
Hard Disk Space: 2Mb
Graphics: VGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Mouse, keyboard



Score

79

Excellent gothic adventure scuppered by dodgy navigation. Waaaaah.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Interplay
Tel: 01235 821666

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

(Main image) A rogue asteroid on a collision course with Earth. And so the cosmic ballet goes on... *(Er, yes, very deep Paul – Ed.)*

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

The Dig

Steven Spielberg, Steven Spielberg, Steven Spielberg, Steven Spielberg, Paul Presley, Steven Spielberg, Steven Spielberg, Steven Spielberg, Steven Spielberg...

LET'S GET THIS OUT OF THE WAY right now. Yes, Steven Spielberg had a hand in *The Dig*. He devised the original story then handed it to LucasArts and said something along the lines of, "There you go lads, go and make us a game. Can I go and do that dinosaur thing now?" This means that *The Dig* is an interesting tale, a cut above the normal sci-fi adventure game (light years beyond *Guilty*, for example). What it doesn't mean is that every time you put the thing on Mr ET will come round to your living room and play it with you. It doesn't mean that every time you put it on your house will suddenly be transformed into the landing pad from *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*. It simply means that you're playing an adventure game with an interesting story. That's all. Understood? Right, on with the game and no more mention of Schindler boy.

Obligatory plot description

You'll know the basics of the story from all the previews and advertising that's been littering these pages over the past few months, and to give away the finer details would serve to totally ruin the enjoyment of the game. Adventures, as I may have made testament to in the past, live or die by their stories and *The Dig's* is a cut above the norm. Just to brief those of you who haven't caught up with it yet, I'll encapsulate the story in a short series of keywords. Readers that would prefer not to have it spoilt for them should skip on to the next paragraph. Okay, still with me? Right: Giant Asteroid, collision with Earth, shuttle mission, save the day, *Space 1999*,

(Right) Our heroes give a press briefing. "Andy Coulsen, *The Sun*. Have the three of you ever engaged in a three-way NASA sex romp?" "Could we restrict this to questions about the forthcoming end of the world issue please?"











mysterious panels, asteroid shoots off, astronauts trapped, alien world, dead spirits, *Lost In Space*, make a trade, life and death, get back home, *Noel's House Party*. Obviously there's more to it than that (and the *Noel's House Party* bit was a lie), but those are the essentials. Right, let's join the others and talk graphics.

Pamela Anderson

So, the visuals. Well let's just say that a mixed bag of high-quality nuts would be an appropriate metaphor to play with right here. On the one hand you have the kind of gorgeous animation seen in *Full Throttle* and stunning ILM-created cut-scenes and spot effects (and I do mean *stunning*), while on the other hand you have the traditional side-on adventure character figures with typical animation routines and the usual glove-puppet mouth movements that we've been seeing since *Monkey Island*. Sure it's a little more detailed than before and the characters have a slightly better range of movement, but it's still everything you've come to expect.

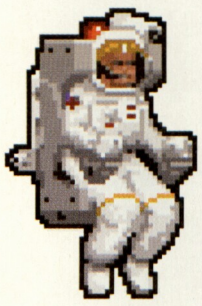
Now, while I kneel and offer praise to Charlton Heston that LucasArts hasn't yet fallen into the abysmal trap of using live-action digitisation for its main characters (*à la* Sierra), you'd think that it would at least have been able to come up with something new and improved by now. The company continues to show innovation in just about every other area of its game designs, why not here too?

Another LucasArts familiar is the 'Muse' sound and atmosphere generating gizmo. An ever-constant musical score that changes in relation to the on-screen events that has been with us since *Monkey Island 2*. Here though, there is no qualm to be had. The music in *The Dig* is some of the best I've heard for a long, long time. Beautiful »

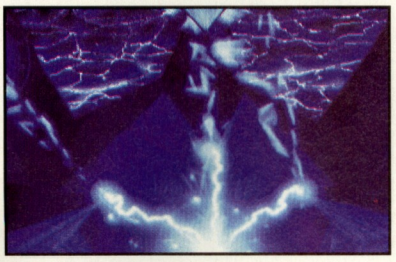
Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Hard Disk Space: Minimal
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard

(Above) Danger! Thrills! Spills! See Commander Bent Strangely attacked by a glowing light! Coming to a theatre near you soon in *Attack Of The Killer Mutant Space Thingies!*







(Left) Weird pulsating blue rhythms. The universal sign for a futuristic power source. And to the left, the machine that goes Ping!

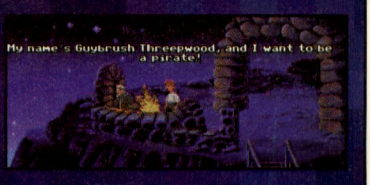
Indiana Jones and the Merchandising of Doom

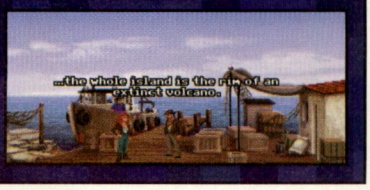
Every LucasArts release is generally something of a media 'event', but *The Dig* is obviously grabbing hold of the merchandising opportunities with all the tenacity of a Rottweiller on a defenceless baby. Not only is *The Dig* a game, but according to Virgin's press department it's "The centrepiece in another kind of entertainment collaboration". What this means in plain English is that Virgin and LucasArts mean to fleece your pockets totally dry by releasing the game, a CD soundtrack of the admittedly impressive in-game music, a novel of the story and an audio drama similar to the sort of plays you find on Radio 4 in the afternoon, just after *The Archers*. What do you mean, "What's Radio 4?" Pah, I don't know, kids today...

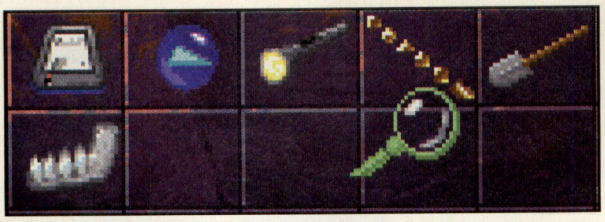
Close Encounters of the Third, Fourth and Fifth kind...

Most of you know by now that Harrison 'Chuckles' Ford has agreed to do a fourth *Indiana Jones* flick, so it should come as no surprise to learn that LucasArts has decided to push the Everyone's-Favourite-Archaeologist bandwagon for another mile or so. Indiana Jones and the Yet To Be Named Adventure *is* on the way and is likely to be a direct tie-in to the film (unless the film turns out to be about Atlantis, in which case the game will be about something else – that's right, we've had the announcement but none of the details).

Also making a stopover at the Game Sequel Motel is *Monkey Island 3*, the long-awaited follow-up to the hugely popular *Monkey Island 2*. Again details are sketchy (LucasArts are like that) but the rumour mill has it that Guybrush Threepwood will once again be swashing and buckling in another matter of life, limb and laughs aplenty. (*Congratulations Paul, you've turned saying nothing at all into an art form – Ed.*) Thanks.









(Right) Who said the Newton wouldn't catch on? This one even comes with an in-built game of *Oids*. Retro gaming ahoy!

(Below) "Anyone make a 'For mash get Smash' joke and they're dead!"

orchestral tones sweeping in and out of Wagnerian-style crescendos lend a majestic *2001: A Space Odyssey* kind of feel to things (though mighty thankfully there isn't a clichéd *Blue Danube* tune accompanying the space shuttle sequences). This is one game soundtrack that deserves its release on audio CD.

Dark (marketing) Forces

Right, so for the main part it looks very nice and is generally very well put together, but it does lack a certain something. The overall atmosphere is enough to make other adventures hang their collective heads but it lacks that touch of magic that made the *Indiana Jones* and the *Monkey Island* games so very, very special. Also, I don't really want to sound like a jingoistic fool or anything, but I'm not sure if, for an adventure, it's as good as the recent British offerings either. It's better than a lot of what we've seen lately, but both *Discworld* and *Simon The Sorcerer 1* and *2* had quite a little more in the way of challenge to them.

LucasArts can certainly tell some damn fine stories and in this respect *The Dig* is no exception. But so often the urge to keep the story flowing overshadows the need to challenge the player. A little patience and a repetitive mouse-clicking finger and you'll be through to the end within a couple of days. *The Dig* is certainly more creative than that in most places but there's still none of the old brain-taxing brilliance such as the Nazi Castle sequence from *Indy And The Last Crusade* or the verbal banter of *Monkey Island*'s sword-fighting scenes. These have gone down in the annals of adventure game history as true, true classic moments and it was this kind of sheer genius that made LucasArts what it is today. It's just a shame that we've never seen anything quite like it since.

What *The Dig* does have that captures the LucasArts magic so incredibly well though, is the way that it sucks you into the story. Remember playing *Full Throttle* and knowing full well that you'd nearly finished? Do you remember the feeling that you really didn't want it to end? Well, *The Dig* manages to do this by giving you a fantastic story and throwing in characters that you really 'feel' for. No other developer has managed to perfect this, while the LucasArts guys seem to do it every time.

Leave them wanting more

What have we got then? An attractive looking game that has an intriguing story to it, but one that isn't too tricky to complete. Much the same was said about *Full Throttle* once people had spent some time with it, but *The Dig* isn't that bad (yeah, yeah, I know I'm flying in the face of controversy by criticising *Full Throttle*, but I didn't much care for it okay?). Lengthwise at least it scores over Ben the Biker's exploits by a factor of ten and even if it isn't a *Monkey Island*, its puzzle quotient is far better too. And for once, it isn't all simply use the right object in the right location either. There are combination locks, cryptic alien panels to figure out, even a futuristic version of Big Trac. I would have liked a little more in the way of speech options (another hankering after the past), but on the whole it's a varied combination.

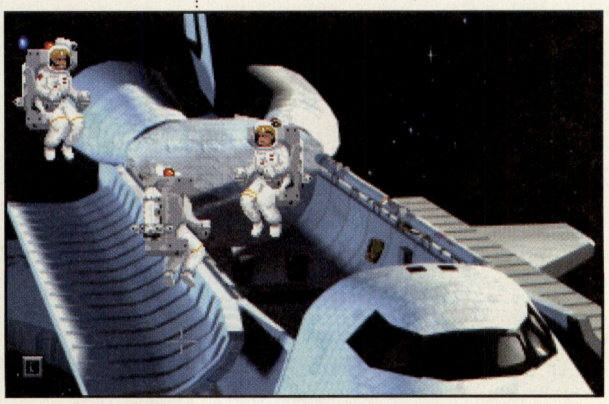
Despite my queries over its ability to keep your brain overly taxed, *The Dig* creates a nice enough atmosphere while you're inside to warrant your constant attention. It's not the greatest thing ever to come from LucasArts' stable, but it's a positive step back to the former halcyon days and I can't wait to see what comes next. Z

And in a packed show tonight...

Apart from The Man Who Shall Remain Nameless, *The Dig* boasts a host of (all right, three) other top names. First off there's everyone's favourite homicidal killer robot from the future, Robert Patrick providing the voice of the game's leading man. Robert Patrick? *Terminator 2?* The robot that wasn't Arnie? Yeah, you remember.

Next comes the award-winning science fiction novelist Orson Scott Card providing the game's dialogue to give it a realistic feel. Orson Scott Card? He wrote *Ender's Game* and *Speaker For The Dead*. No, no, books. You know, those things with pages? Never mind...

Finally there are the boys and girls of Industrial Light & Magic lending the game all sorts of special effects techniques to give it its very classy look. Well, it certainly beats the pants off all that rendering stuff from France. The shuttle fly-by of the incoming asteroid in the intro sequence is stunning enough to belong in a real film, let alone a simple computer game. Just count yourselves damn bloody lucky, say I.



Score

87

***The Dig* is a positive step back to the good old days. It's a proper adventure with a proper story.**

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Now
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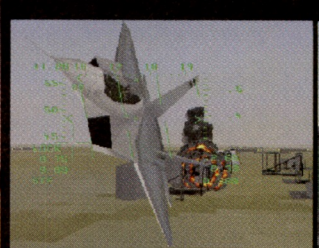
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It's the latest game from 21st Century Entertainment. Guess what it is? Patrick McCarthy thought there was a chance that it might be a polygon based beat 'em up. *(But he's very stupid – Ed.)*



Pinball World



Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 386SX/40
Hard Disk Space: 5Mb
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard

OKAY, SO IT ISN'T A POLYGON-BASED beat 'em up. But, if you go by the title, it could have been a particularly specialised wrestling simulation. But it isn't. It's another pinball game. But a pinball game (pauses) *with a difference*.

Oh God. Not that

I know. I thought we'd had our share of pinball games that were trying to introduce something a little 'extra' a few years ago. Their designers were obsessed with producing something a little more obviously 'of the computer', and a little less 'of the seedy pub at the end of the ramshackle pier packed to the brim with knife-wielding Care in the Community cases'. They were called things like *Pinball With Attichude*, or *Metal Skull Pinball Of Death*. They had heavy metal soundtracks to flip your balls to and, in the middle of flipping a ball into a little slot at the top of the machine, the screen would go all wavy and you'd see the ball zipping through hyperspace, before it landed on a distant planet where it would proceed to bounce against a huge alien monster's testicles. Once you'd made the alien's eyes fill with the requisite number of tears, you'd be zapped back to the original, earth-bound table and carry on flipping.



Dead people and cheesy balls

I thought the people who had invented them all had long since been humanely put to sleep, because lately all we've had by way of pinball games are straight ahead classic-style tables, with clanking metal sound effects, rickety ramps, flickering lights and cheesy tunes. Which is fine by me. Now, though, the high-concept pinball games are with us again. In this particular case, the point of the game is to 'travel around the world' in the form of a number of tables which represent different countries.

Around the world in 80 plays

What it boils down to is a series of table layouts based around a number of different countries or Continents, with extra flippers and ramps and stuff arranged in interesting new ways. In other words, instead of playing the game up the screen as usual, you play upwards and sideways. Thankfully, there's no de-materialising or space-warping nonsense and, of course, they've had enough experience of making these things by now to make the ball move realistically. The only way to get to the next country, though, is to look in the manual and check out what you have to do: 800 hits of a certain



light, spell out Travel Agents Suck, or whatever. And off you go, 'steering' a vehicle to your next destination. Hold me back. At least you don't have to start at the same country each time: there's a pinball-based selection screen.

Apart from the table layouts, the game doesn't really give you anything markedly different to any of their other offerings. The music is a bit lame and the sound effects rather tired. As for travelling between different tables, I'd rather just pick a table and play it. After all, you only play pinball when you're drunk, or bored, or both. Who needs all that other crap? But there you go. **Z**

(Above) Surely an Arctic roll was never this much fun?

(Far left) Jungle japes as your balls swirl round the Amazon.

Score

77

Ooh, a pinball game. That makes a nice change.

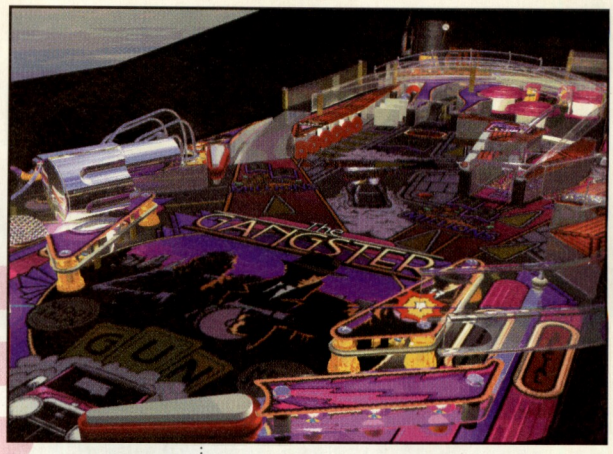
Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: 21st Century Entertainment
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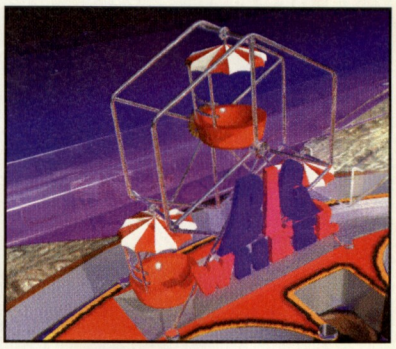
"If you give me one more pinball game to review," said Patrick McCarthy, "I may well kill myself." What further incentive could we ask for?



(Above) The hi-res rendered stuff really is a bit flash. It looks almost real, doesn't it?

(Right) Everything is presented with the upmost flash and pomposity.

(Below left) The view is pretty much what you would see if you were playing 'for real'.



TILT IS AN ATTEMPT TO BRING pinball to the computer rather than making a computer pinball game. That's what it says here, anyway. So we're talking realism. At least this means it won't be warping us into some virtual underpants and make the balls rattle around inside the pilch, or anything. I don't think so, anyway. All these pinball games are starting to seriously affect my health.

Table mountain

It comes with six tables, all with short, snappy but curiously evocative names. *Monster*, as you'd expect, presents a Nigel Kennedy/Eric Hall theme, with the background made up entirely of violins, overly-gelled haircuts and outrageously expensive, sickening yellow jackets. *Roadking* is about the life of Sir Somebody Macadam, inventor of tarmac as well as discoverer of the macadamia nut. See him rise to prominence during the Depression while people in flat caps starve to death; see his committed support of the Conservative party; see them give him a knighthood in return; etc etc. *Funfair* is a celebration of the gum-chewing halfwits who stand behind you on the Waltzer doing their impressions of the banjo player from *Deliverance* and trying to impress chicks by making them vomit. *Gangster* is about dressing up in baggy jeans and a string vest, and swearing to music; *Sci-fi* is about the adventures of a Trekkie who goes to a convention dressed as Spock and gets beaten up by Dr Who fanatics and whipped with their traily scarves. And *Myst & Majik* is about a dyslexic advertising copy-writer's campaign for a chocolate-flavoured edible hair-care product. Actually I made that last one up. *(And the rest – Ed.)* All right, they're all lies. The tables are about horror films, driving, a circus, gangsters, sci-fi and hippies with swords.

Table mannerisms

The tables were modelled and rendered on Silicon Graphics workstations, and we all know what that means – about a fiver onto the price of the game. Ho ho. No, it means they 'Look Nice'. There are three different views of each table, depending on the resolution you opt for. At 320x200, you can see the table as a scrolling playfield: in other words, a forced perspective viewpoint that doesn't show all the table at once. At 800x600 resolution, you can only see it in its entirety – the only things moving will be the balls, flippers and effects. It's forced perspective, again, but is more like standing at the bottom of a table. Actually, the view's a little low for me, so you could say it's like a vertically-challenged person standing at the bottom of a table. The middle resolution, 680x480, can show the table in both of these views, along with a scrolling top-down (or plan, as they call it) view.

Relativity table

And that's basically it. The music has been specially composed in a variety of musical styles by a "leading games musician", and is better than that in *Pinball World*, but not as good as *The Web*'s. And you can say about the same about the gameplay, too. There are introductory and in-game animations and the tables play reasonably well – but they can be a bit samey, and don't have the sheer depth of the single table in *The Web*. It's pretty good, though – and you do get six tables. **Z**

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard



Score

80

Not bad at all. It doesn't get too 'samey' as there are six tables to choose from.

Price: £TBC **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Tel: 0171-368 2255

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Pro Pinball: The Web

PC ZONE CLASSIC





Ooh, lawks a mercy, take me to the bottom of our stairs, it's a pinball game. You don't see many of those around these days. You do see rather too much of Patrick McCarthy, though.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BODS AT Empire, who have officially produced the one millionth computer pinball game for the PC (counting 21st Century's 993,000 efforts as separate games, of course). As such they are the happy winners of a lifetime's supply of ready-to-eat chicken sweepings and a free packet of novelty dog condoms in the flavour and colour of their choice. Life just doesn't get any better than this.

Please Sir, I want some more

Pro Pinball: The Web, to give it its formal title, is the first in what shows every sign of being a fairly lengthy series of pinball games. Hence the 'Pro Pinball' bit at the front. In future, the discerning computer game purchaser will be able to spot all the others in the series by this astute identification device.

Unlike most computer pinball games, it features just one table. Wait, don't turn the page. It only features one table because the designer wanted to give his utmost, to concentrate his entire feelings for the game in this one, perfect table. So that the table itself almost comes to represent *all* pinball tables. It is the pinball table we see in our hearts. It is the universal pinball table – it is pinball itself. We become as one with the table, the table becomes a part of us. Or maybe there's just more money in it this way.

Life with flippers

Pro Pinball: The Web is a seriously good pinball game. The designer is pinball bonkers, and it shows. Okay so there may just be the one table, but it plays the best game of pinball yet seen on a computer. It's based on wide-bodied Williams tables, which admittedly means sod all to me, but should mean something to his fellow flipper merchants (no, not Japanese fishermen).

It's what's generally known as 'feature-packed', with targets, grab magnets, drop targets, sink holes, an auto plunger, loops, three flippers, two ramps and God alone knows what else. The table is viewed in its entirety, and can be viewed from six different viewpoints at many different resolutions, including a rather impressive 1024x768, with 32,000 colours. There's a realistic dot matrix display, sampled speech and loads of sub-games which are triggered by following instructions very carefully and performing all sorts of tricky little tasks. You even get little arcade games popping up at the top and there can be up to six balls in simultaneous multi-play – and it still moves like Salman Rushdie down Tehran High Street.

It has a set of music tracks to go with it which have been written specially for the game by Jake Burns (from Stiff Little Fingers, who should have retired straight after *Suspect Device*) and Bruce Foxton (the one from The Jam with the second worst haircut after the drummer). Some people might describe the music as 'kicking' (Features Ed Chris absolutely loved it). We like to call it smoochy. (But we're very rough in bed.)

So it's very realistic (for example, you can nudge the table from either side as well as the bottom), and a bit of a looker. I'd have preferred, say, three views each of two tables for my money, but that doesn't alter the fact that the one you do get is very good indeed. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 486/33
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard

Score

90

Don't come running to us if you get sore fingers.

Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Empire Interactive
Tel: 0181-343 7337

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

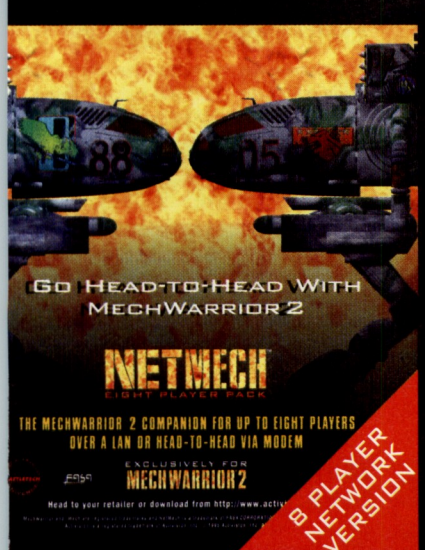




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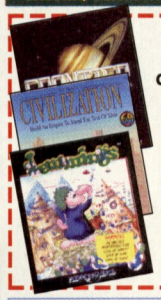
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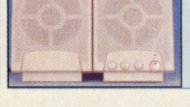
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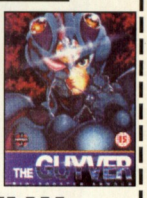
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Entomorph

SSI thinks it's got an *Ultima* beater with this one. Chris Anderson's not so sure.



ULTIMA FANS COULD BE FORGIVEN for mistaking *Entomorph* for another episode in the seemingly endless series Lord British seems intent on inflicting on us – out of all of them *Entomorph* bears the most resemblance to *Ultima VIII*, with the familiar top-down view of the action and gorgeous hi-res SVGA graphics. Then there's the sword and sorcery setting and liberal scattering of spells throughout to further confirm the *Ultima*-ness of the whole thing. A direct comparison between the two seems the best way to keep things simple and find out which one comes out on top. Here goes...

Entomorph Vs Ultima VIII

Graphics

Entomorph's graphics are extremely nice. The sprites move realistically, the backgrounds are colourful, and the combat scenes are depicted in a suitably action-packed fashion. But *Ultima VIII*, with its lush to-die-for graphics and superb sprite animation, wins hands down.





Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/66
Hard Disk Space: 8Mb
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All Windows compatible sound cards
Controls: Mouse

Gameplay

Entomorph starts off rather well – I thought I had a monster of a game on my hands when I first started it. The tale of the misguided Jagtera (big nasty flying insects that have suddenly got pissed off) is quite intriguing. You play Squire Warrick, a young warrior looking to bring peace to a troubled land. Your time is spent exploring, finding spells, fighting people and getting info from everyone you meet; it's all great fun for a while, but becomes repetitive after continued play. On the other hand, *Ultima VIII* is a massive game that oozes playability and is arguably the best of the *Ultima* series. The puzzles are taxing without being impossible, and as the storyline is always branching off it never gets boring. Some people prefer *Ultima VII* because you're more closely involved with the in-game characters, but I'd go for the ultra-looking *Ultima VIII* every time. So, *Entomorph* put up a brave battle on the gameplay front but ultimately (sorry) lost out.



(Below) This is your typical all-knowing, white-bearded, wise bloke.

(Left) In true RPG style, you get to hang around in dark caves.



Atmosphere

The graphics and gameplay in *Entomorph* don't quite match up to those of *Ultima VIII* but they're still pretty good in their own right. However, the general *feel* is somewhat lacking, due to backing tracks which would be more suited to an action game, and the on-screen text for the dialogue (surely we could have speech for most of the game?) looks bland and dull. In comparison, *Ultima VIII's* rousing musical scores and superb sound effects create a perfect atmosphere.

In conclusion

It's not that I want to put you off *Entomorph*. It's good and reasonably big, with a fairly engrossing storyline – it's just that with a bit more work the presentation could have been a lot better. If you've already got *Ultima VIII* and you want something that's similar in style, *Entomorph* is worth a look. But if you've got to choose between the two, *Ultima VIII* is the one to go for. **Z**

Score

78

Engrossing, despite slightly lacklustre presentation.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Mindscape **Tel:** 01444 246333

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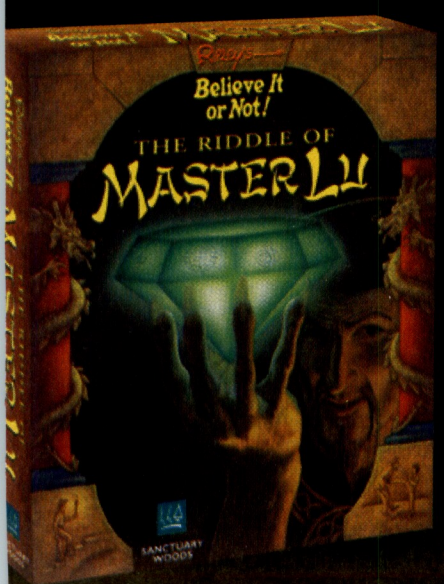


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"The scenery and player environment is nothing less than awesome." PC Zone

"Sweeping animations and carefully conceived close-ups are used to give the game a sense of pace and action." PC Zone

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Fighter Duel

Duncan MacDonald actually saw action as an RAF pilot during the Battle of Britain, and was also, around the same time, a member of the Japanese Air Force, the Luftwaffe and the USAF. So who could be more qualified to review *Fighter Duel?* *(Simon Bradley? - Ed.)*

THIS IS BIZARRE! FIGHTER DUEL should be an absolute piece of piss to explain, seeing as how there's so little to it, yet somehow I don't know where to start; and instead I'm just kind of sitting here at my PC asking myself a bunch of unanswerable questions about the thing.

It goes without saying that that's not much use to you though, so I'd better quickly explain what's what regarding the actual game itself, and get back to the unanswerable questions afterwards.

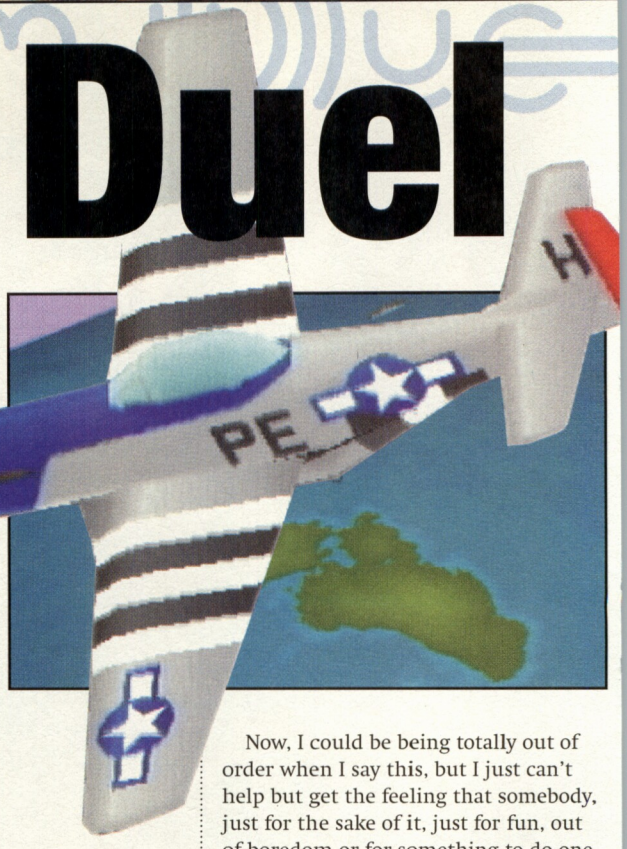
Okay, so *Fighter Duel* then. It's a no-frills WW2 fighter combat sim, and the reason I say 'no frills' is that there's no career mode, no storyline, nothing. What you get is a selection of planes and a lump of sky in which to fly them. (Here's an aircraft cast-list for prop-heads: the F4U-1D and F2G Corsair; P-51D Mustang; F6F Hellcat; Spitfires Mk I, V, IX and XIV; A6M5 Zero; MES 109E, G and K and the FW-190A. All look the part and fly nicely, by the way.)

So you've got your planes and you've got your sky... what's missing? Yup, enemies. Luckily you can choose from eight of the above aircraft and allocate each with intelligence varying from novice through to ace. So it could be you in a Spit versus one very clever ME 109. Or you in a Zero against three shite Mustangs and a mediocre Hellcat. And so on. (A quick thumbs up for the aircraft closure rates, incidentally.) And, believe it or not, that's sort of 'it'. Oh, apart from the option to choose your starting location, which'll either be the small aircraft carrier, the tiny island runway, or in the air.

All of which brings me right back to the unanswerable questions I was whining on about only a moment ago...

Question 1: Why?
Question 2: Why?
Question 3: Why?

One thing that struck me about *Fighter Duel* is that somehow it feels like a practice mode for a main game – except, of course, there *is* no main game. Another thing is this: how come a game so bereft of ground-based visuals should make so little of what scenery *is* available? There's got to be plenty of processor power in reserve, surely, what with virtually nothing to move about? Or maybe not, judging by the following evidence: the couple of tiny islands you'll find are completely flat and featureless, but still hit you with jerkovision when you get too close. And are there any proper fluffy clouds? No! And no sun glare, either. Even the sea graphic is crap, offering you next to no clue as to your altitude until such time as you accidentally land on it. (Okay, I admit I'm exaggerating slightly for effect here, but not by much.)



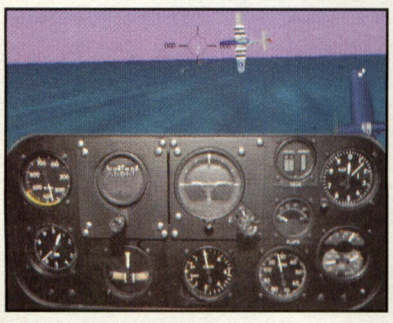
(Above) The mustang pilot sensibly kept well away from Jerkovision Island.

(Below) Water, water everywhere...

(Below left) Nice instrument panel, nice planes, shame about the rest of it.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, joystick





Now, I could be being totally out of order when I say this, but I just can't help but get the feeling that somebody, just for the sake of it, just for fun, out of boredom or for something to do one dark winter evening or whatever, wrote a game engine that allowed nine planes to fly around with a pretty fair degree of aplomb in a completely empty void; and then someone else came along and said, "Hey, if you quickly bunged in some ground and an aircraft carrier we could probably release that."

Fighter Duel reminds me of an old-fashioned Mac game. And yes, there *isn't* a padlock view (although you'd probably guessed that by now). I should mention that there are serial cable and modem options – both of which would be a hoot, obviously – but as a simple 'one-player/in your bedroom/'against the computer' type doofer... well, let's just say *Fighter Duel* begins to suck big time after about an hour and a quarter. Z

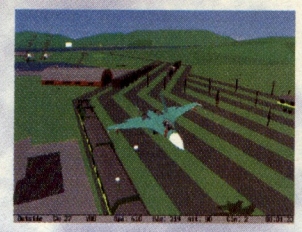
Score

65

Reasonable flight models imprisoned within an iffy game environment.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Philips Media
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SU-27 FLANKER



Anatoly Kvochur, Russia's SU-27 top test and demonstration pilot attests to SU-27 Flanker's authenticity - "The fidelity to the flight model and authenticity of battle environment will dazzle the user. This is the closest you will get without actually flying the Su-27; this is an accurate simulation."

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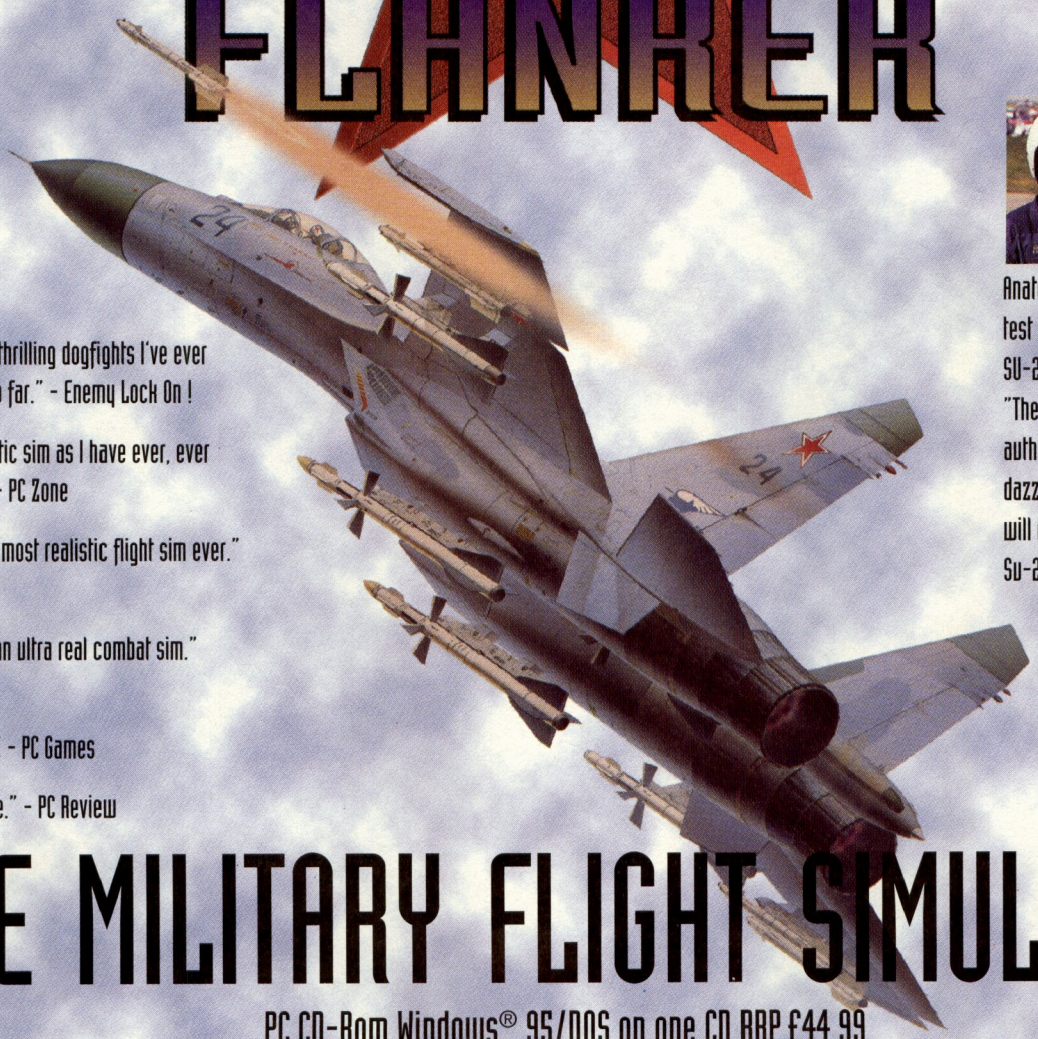
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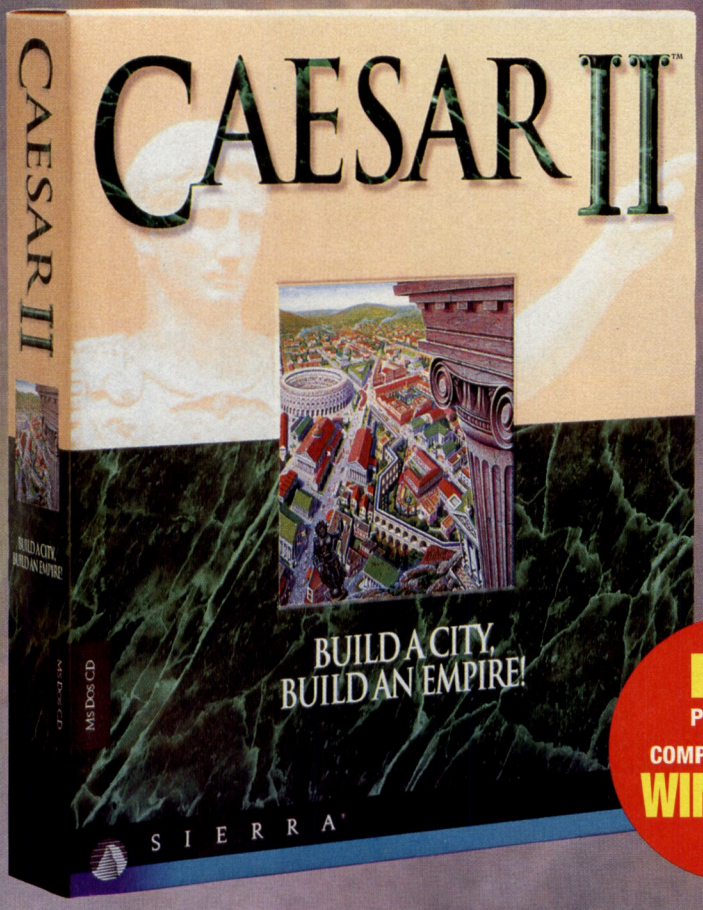
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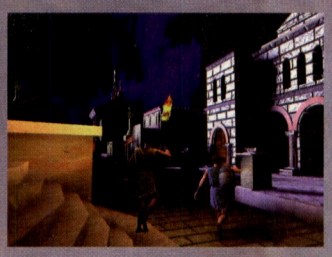
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THE WORLD Deathmatch TOURNAMENT

World Deathmatch 95 – 24 of the best *Doom* Deathmatch players in the world (er, 22 from the US, two from Europe) meet up on the Microsoft Campus in Seattle to battle it out for top spot. An opportunity for the world to see the thrills and skills of Deathmatch, a chance for the best players to finally slug it out, and a celebration of all that is *Doom*-y and frag-based. Er, not quite... David McCandless reports.

WHILE THE HANDSOME UK Doomers slogged it out in various HMVs around the country, the Americans had it good. Organised by DWANGO (Dial-up Wide Area Network Gaming Organisation) who run 22 games servers around the US, competitors for the American leg could play from the safety of home ranches, via modem. After two weeks of toil and trouble, a list of 22 improbably-named winners (Thresh, DrDred, DoomDude, and Sillysoft etc) were posted on Usenet. The final was scheduled for Monday 30 October, coinciding with the launch day for *Hexen*, iD's latest and greatest.

The UK and European contenders – Andre and er, me – were flown out of Heathrow on Friday. We were excited, chatty, and killed at least three people sitting around us with our endless tedious chat about BFG tricks, plasma tunnels and strafe-running.

Monday 30 October

3:00pm

After spending the morning chomping the carpet and downing gallons of coke with anticipation, the two UK *Doom* champions saunter cockily down to the reception of the hotel, where we are due to rendezvous with the other players. We are confident that our special brand of wit and sarcasm will stupefy our American opponents. Instead we find lost DWANGO sweatshirt-wearers milling about, not knowing what's going on or where to go. These, we find out, are the organisers.

3:12pm

Merlock calls Macca a "lamer"

3:25pm

No one in the hotel seems to know who DWANGO, iD, or Microsoft are.

3:35pm

We are bustled into the hotel's stylish (not) downstairs bar. There we sit like plucked chickens for nearly an hour, while an army of DWANGO reps zip to and fro. We are all invited to sign a disclaimer (thus giving permission for us to be mocked by the world's press) and a questionnaire. Typical questions:

How do you rate DWANGO?
What would you like to see on DWANGO?
Isn't DWANGO the best? (YES/NO)
Isn't it though? (YES/YES)

They should've given us the questionnaire afterwards.

3:50pm

Silence. Nobody's talking to each other much. The players (ranging in age from 15 to 31) have gravitated into their peer groups. The two fat guys (or 'metabolistically challenged' as they say in the US) with sunglasses are talking to one another. The three tall blond jocks are slapping their thighs in the corner, and the two UK players are staring contemptuously at the rest. One poor guy from Canada has his dad in tow, who keeps saying things like: "Come here son!" or "Stop that son!" He also has a camcorder and insists on filming us. The son isn't saying much.

4:00pm

All the competitors seem like nice, regular guys, bar one – a guy who calls himself Merlock. He fancies himself as the best player in the universe, and swaggers around as if it was true. He's arrogant, impolite, and wearing a neat pair of slip-on black shoes with tassels on the front. He reckons he's going to win, but then we all secretly do, so nobody argues.

4:30pm

On a bus, en route to the Microsoft campus. Excitement. Adrenaline. Laughing. Chatting. This is going to be fun...

4:45pm

Arrive at Microsoft. Ushered through a cold underground carpark, through winding tunnels, and into the Microsoft building proper. It's a rats maze with thousands of little square offices everywhere, each with a desk, phone, and a Gateway 2000 machine. Passing Microsoft employees stare at us strangely, as well they might since we look like a bunch of dickheads. We are led to a small room which, little do we know, will become our tomb for the next eight hours.

5:09pm

Pep talk by Microsoft organiser guy and DWANGO specialist, Lance Lancaster. We are given the rules we'll be playing by:

- Knockout tournament, split into rounds



(Above) The main stage where all manner of 'hilarious' things took place. Devils who managed to fluff their lines were the main attraction, followed at 1:10am by the Deathmatch 95 final.

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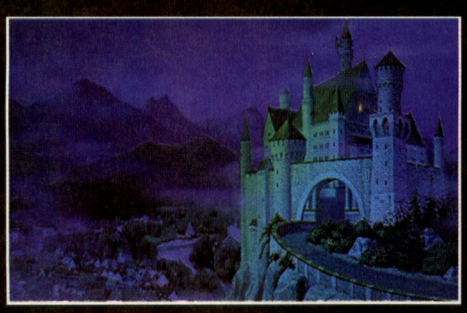
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« • Five minute two-player games on *Doom*, *Doom 2*, and *Heretic* (Deathmatch 2.0, Skill 4)
• Highest accumulated frag scorer is the winner
• Each game played on a mutually acceptable level
• We will be able to configure our mice and keyboards
• We will be in a quiet room with headphones and everything

Sounds good. Sounds professional. Oh, and the catch: *Doom* and *Doom 2* are the Windows 95 versions, and everything is to be played under the DWANGO interface, not on an IPX network.

Still, it doesn't seem too bad. Everybody seems content, although there's much mumbling about the five minute game lengths. The 12 first-round games are drawn at random. Andre is in the 10th round, drawn against Doomdude, and I'm in the 12th round, drawn against DrDred from New York, an animated foetus with a premature moustache. Games are estimated to take about 15 minutes each and two games are played simultaneously, so I have roughly an hour to wait. Okay, fair enough, time for a quick exploration of the Microsoft event, the food, the trade show, the games, and the fabled Haunted House mock-up.

5:02pm

Er, no. Deathmatch contestants aren't allowed to wander around the show. They either have to be escorted or else have to stay in the room. Except...

6:45pm

We are paraded on the main stage, which is basically an opportunity for all the journalists and game company reps to look us over and then deride us.

Afterwards we are hustled back to the 'tomb'.

7:00pm

The first four contestants go for the games. The rest of us wait.

7:30pm

Bored.

7:50pm

Really bored.

8:23pm

Super bored (with bells on).

8:30pm

Andre and I are interviewed by the *Gamesmaster* TV show. We are cheerfully optimistic and crack 'wrist exercise' jokes with Dominic 'Son Of Neil' Diamond.

9:02pm

Interviewed by TV's *Movies, Games & Videos*. No Steve Priestly in sight.

9:12pm

Bored again. We're hearing horror stories from the players. *Doom 95* is a nightmare: you can't configure the mouse properly, there are jolts and pauses in the gameplay, and those who have brought their own mice haven't got the drivers for Windows 95.

9:35pm

Hurrah. A trip to get some food and drink. Food is free and overflowing. Ditto for liquid refreshment – there are fridges full of soft drinks and booze. You just help yourself. Gawd bless Bill Gates.

10:00pm

Andre finally plays his game. He is comfortably winning when I am called away by the ref. Dred, my opponent, is here. "To speed things up, we're going to take you somewhere else," says the ref. Cool. We're going to play on an IPX network. We dutifully follow him through the tunnels, round a corner, down some steps into... the party.

10:05pm

"You want us to play here?" There are ranks of PCs here, loads of people, and noise, a mass of music and *Doom* SFX. A million miles away from the quiet room upstairs. Dred, understandably, says he doesn't want to play. The ref says okay, but if we go upstairs and wait we "may not get to play at all". We swallow this blatant threat and reluctantly sit down at our allocated computers.

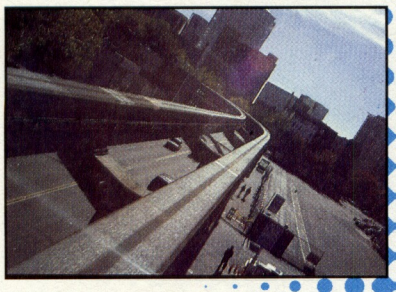
10:15pm

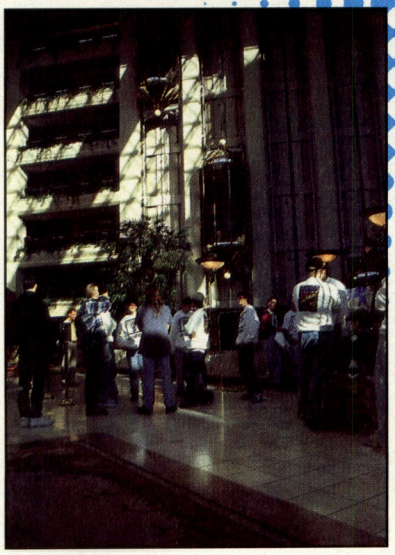
Can't configure the mouse properly. I can change sensitivity, but there's no acceleration. I am screwed.

10:25pm

Our first game starts. *Doom 2*, level one. Except there is another game going on at the same time as ours. We have no headphones. I can't hear anything except BFGs going off in the game next-door. My mouse doesn't work. I lose 5-3. »







(Left column, top to bottom)
Andre Sverre Kvernmo, winner of the UK leg of Deathmatch 95, and – coincidentally – only European contributor to iD's *Doom 2: The Master Levels*, released this month.

Seattle, blurry monorail shot.

Chaos reigns in the hotel. All the Doom competitors – sporting their fabulous DWANGO adverts... er sorry, sweatshirts – mill around aimlessly as the 'organisers' try to organise. A sign of things to come.

10:35pm
Next game is *Doom 1*. Except, for some reason, they move us to a different computer where we spend another ten minutes reconfiguring our controls. We start the game. It crashes.

10:45pm
There is some problem with the *Doom 95* beta. A Microsoft expert comes over and copies some files. He uses DOS to do it, not Explorer.

10:55pm
Dum-de-dum. More errors. Getting very bored now.

11:07pm
At last, it's working. The game starts. It's *Doom 1*, level one. Conscious of my previous defeat, I fight hard and surge to a 7-1 lead. There's one minute of the game left and... Dred quits out.

11:11pm
Whaaaaaaat?

11:12pm
Expletives deleted:

Dred: I had no sound

Me: Neither did I.

Dred: It took you four minutes of the game to realise you had no sound?

Bystander: He cheated. He quit out because he was losing.

DWANGO ref: Play the game again.

Me: What?

DWANGO ref: Start the game again.

Our ref: Oh man, they've really screwed you on this one.

Me: Jesus.

11:15pm
We play again. This time with headphones. I am mad, I am worked up. I lose 3-2. I am pissed off. The Microsoft guys who are watching agree that I have been "screwed".

11:29pm
We play *Heretic*. I just splash around the first room, refusing to play properly and sending silly messages to my opponent. A DWANGO rep leans over and asks me to play properly. I refuse and Dred wins 3-0.

11:35pm
That's it? Game over man.

11:45pm
Andre plays his second round game against Thresh. The DWANGO guys have commuted the rules because they're running out of time. You now only play a ten minute game on *Doom 2*, level 1. Andre fights valiantly but eventually loses. Thresh will go on to win the entire tournament.

11:50pm
The British interest now evaporated, the UK camera crews sigh with relief and go home. No such luck for us – we have to wait for the final to be played so we can get the bus home.

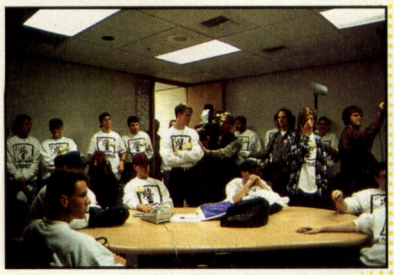
12:45pm
The semi-finals are played on the big 100-inch screens on the main stage. Initial enthusiasm from the audience soon turns to boredom as the players take ages to set up their keys. The first semi-final is played and won by Thresh. But oh no, one of the guys was playing in SVGA, which means he had a slower frame rate. It has to be played again. Merlock (who has had two byes into the quarter finals) plays his semi and loses – hahaha. He kicks his chair in disgust. We laugh.

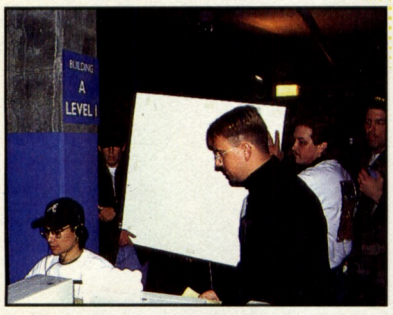
1:15am
The final is finally played on *Hexen*, level 1. Cleaners are hoovering around the stage. After five minutes of moderately-paced deathmatching and cat calls from the audience (along the lines of "Play *Doom!*" and then more heatedly, "We w-a-n-t *Doom*!"), the DWANGO server crashes. The game hangs. There's silence. And then DWANGO Bob bravely steps forward.

1:20am
Bob: We have a winner.

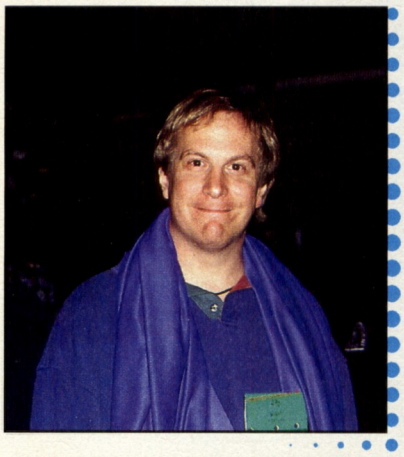
Audience: Oh really?

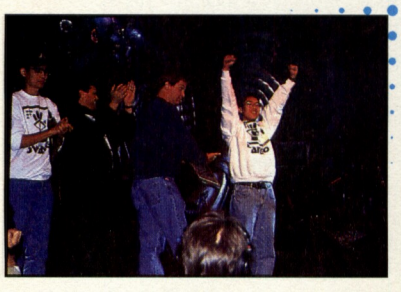
1:30am
Now that there's nothing much left to do, we all decide to say our goodbyes to the US of A, catch the bus and make our way over the Atlantic home. **Z**











(Left column, top to bottom)

The room. TV crews wander around desperately trying to avoid interviewing Merlock (centre). We spent five hours in this cubby hole waiting to play our games.

The famous 'board' incident. Two quarter finalists were so cleverly placed (one behind the other) that two burly DWANGO chaps had to hold a board between the players, so that the one sitting at the rear couldn't see his opponent's monitor. Brilliant.

That scum-sucker DrDred again, before I decapitated him.

Jay Wilbur from ID Software: drunk.

The winner, Thresh, er, winning. A very nice chap he was too. His prize: a $10,000 games system. Nice.



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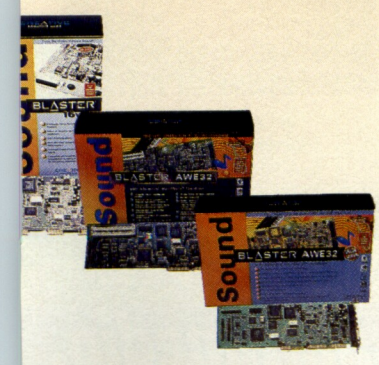
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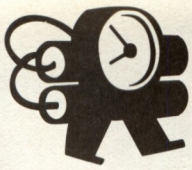
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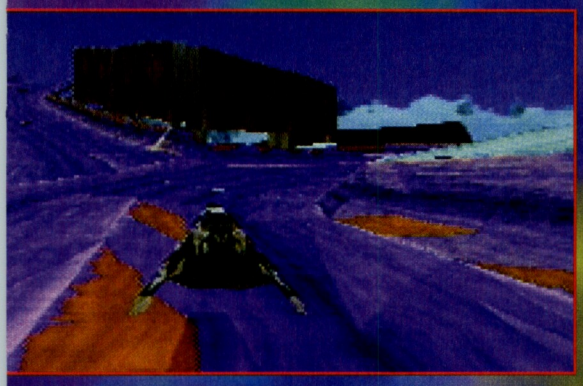
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ANSWER.....

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ANSWER.....

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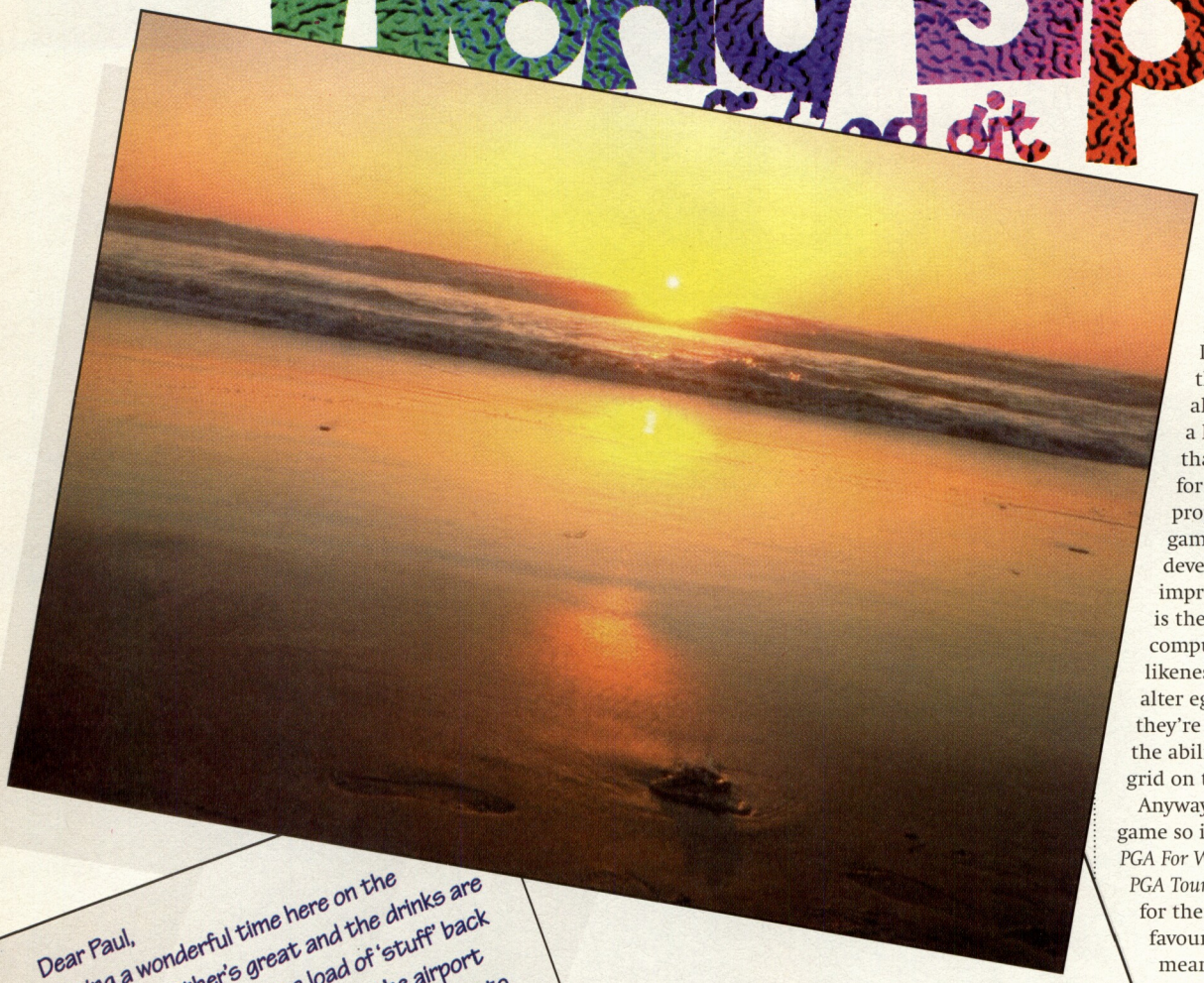
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Tales from a foreign land. *PC Zone's* very own super-scrimper finds sun, sea and budget-related opportunities a-plenty in the heat-soaked climes of the beautiful Bahamas. Paul Presley is our man with the postcard.

Tony Split



Dear Paul,

Having a wonderful time here on the beach. The weather's great and the drinks are dirt cheap. I'll be bringing a load of 'stuff' back with me, so can you meet me at the airport (preferably on the runway so's I don't have to bovver with all that customs stuff)?

I've met a bloke out here who sells games, so natch I thought of you straight away. Apparently he can get all the latest titles at massively reduced prices thanks to his brother, who works at a local import/export warehouse or something.

Anyway, all he does is re-jig the packaging slightly, and then he resells the games under his own brand name. He wants me to set up a branch in London; I've sent a few of them to you along with this package, so could you get 'em in the mag and give us a bit of coverage?

Cheers matey, see you in a few weeks,

Tony

Paul Presley
England

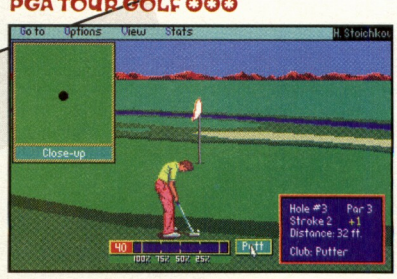
PGA Tour Golf For Windows

Long though my fight to champion the superiority of *David Leadbetter's Golf* has been, I can't help but feel that while the infernal *PGA* brand remains alive and spawning I am waging a losing battle. It would seem that computer golfers care little for accurate ball dynamics, proper handicap scoring, multiple game types and continuous player development. Instead you get the impression that all they care about is the ability to play mediocre computer players (bearing no more likeness to their famously-named alter egos other than the fact that they're playing golf) and not having the ability to see the green and its grid on the same screen.

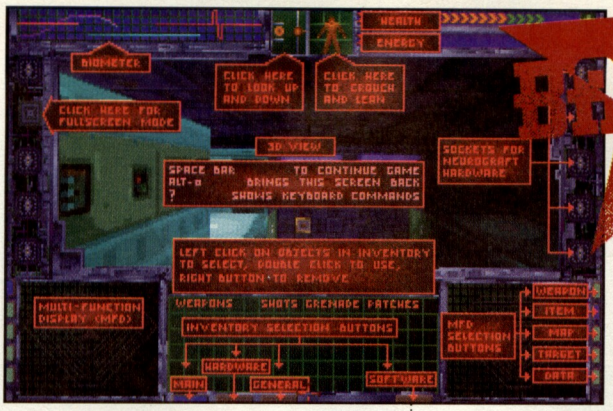
Anyway, this isn't a review of DL's game so instead let me tell you that *PGA For Windows* is the basic, original *PGA Tour Golf* but with a few extra frills for the pre-'95 version of everyone's favourite DOS replacement. Which means that everyone in the *PGA* camp will either already have it or be saving up for the 486 version (reviewed in issue 32), while everyone else should be urged to buy a certain other game that I may have already mentioned earlier in the first sentence. *(Er, yes... very subtle Paul – Ed.)*

SCORE ●●●
PRICE £11.99

PGA TOUR GOLF ●●●



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SYSTEM SHOCK ●●●●●

Heroes Of The 357th

Some games capture the imagination and stay with us all our lives. Some allow us to laugh at them before tossing them with a shrug into the wastebin of pointlessness. Others cause a flicker of interest at the time but soon outstay their welcome and vanish, the digital equivalent of fast food. *Heroes Of The 357th* is one such Big Mac. Too long in the tooth to hack it with today's big boys, *Heroes* doesn't have much to recommend it other than the fact that it'll run smoothly on most of today's high-powered machines.

Just as flight sim technology has grown up over the past three years, so too has the audience. Admittedly, there aren't too many World War II games out there at the moment but even when it was first released it was a poor second to Dynamix's *Aces* range – and with those available on budget as well, it still is.

SCORE ●●●
PRICE £9.99

Noctropolis

It's not often you see super-heroes on your computer screen, which is strange considering how popular they are in the rest of the media. You can't turn on your TV without bumping into animated Batmen, Spider Men or Phantom 2040s, and the cinema seems to have a new comic book adaptation every other week. Where they all go wrong though, is in believing that super-heroes are for kids and should therefore be treated with child-like simplicity (take the bitterly disappointing *The Shadow* for example). *Noctropolis* was one of the few times non-comic book writers decided on an adult flavour for caped crusaders.

Sadly this didn't mean anything like an intelligent plot, a sophisticated adventure or even a decent interface, but rather the occasional use of an expletive and the odd, fleeting nipple or two. An admirable effort but ultimately doomed to the shores of averagedom.

SCORE ●●●
PRICE £11.99

NOCTROPOLIS ●●●



System Shock

Before *Doom* killed off our social interaction skills, you may remember a tiny little American company called Origin producing a series of first-person smooth-scrolling action-style games. *System Shock* was *Ultima Underworld* in the future, and jolly spiffing it was too. I don't think I've ever come across a more 'complete' game, by which I mean something that has everything you could possibly expect from it. The first time I played it I remember thinking, "You know what, this could do with some kind of video-communications system to give it a more cyberpunk feel", only to suddenly have the game deliver exactly that. Every time you think that *System Shock* should have a certain something to make it just a little bit better, you get it.

The other point worth mentioning is the freedom of movement available. *System Shock* lets you run, jump, crawl, lie down, crouch, look up and down, see behind you and even stick your head around corners to see what lies in wait. *Doom* may have been fast, but nothing has managed to be this real so far. A class product. It deserves to be bought.

SCORE ●●●●●
PRICE £11.99

Lure Of The Temptress

Whatever happened to Revolution Software? Charles Cecil's team of happy-go-lucky programmers should have turned the adventure world on its head with their snazzy Virtual Theatre interface – the first adventure game engine to provide a world in which the characters and locations all existed in real-time – but two releases down the line and they seem to have vanished.

LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS ●●



Contacts

EA Classics
01753 549442
The Hit Squad
0161-832 6633

Lure Of The Temptress was the first VT game and despite being a little on the small side, it proved itself to be a worthwhile addition to the growing number of British adventure titles.

It's been released at a budget price before, but this time round it's on CD. The only trouble is, this doesn't add anything significant to the game, so it seems pointless – if you were going to buy it at a budget price, you would have done so already. A game past its sell-by date, I'm afraid. Let's hope the same hasn't been said of VT by Revolution.

SCORE ●●
PRICE £12.99

Tactical Manager

There are more full-priced football management games at the moment than there are reporters outside Will Carling's house, so to have them start appearing on budget labels as well is enough to make Patrick McCarthy leave the country. *Tactical Manager* first appeared around August last year and so while the player names and other real-life data may be dated, so too are all the ideas and innovations that made it appealing the first time round. You see, *Tactical Manager* was originally a bit of a mixed fishy – some nice ideas, lots of annoying ones. Now it's all annoyances.

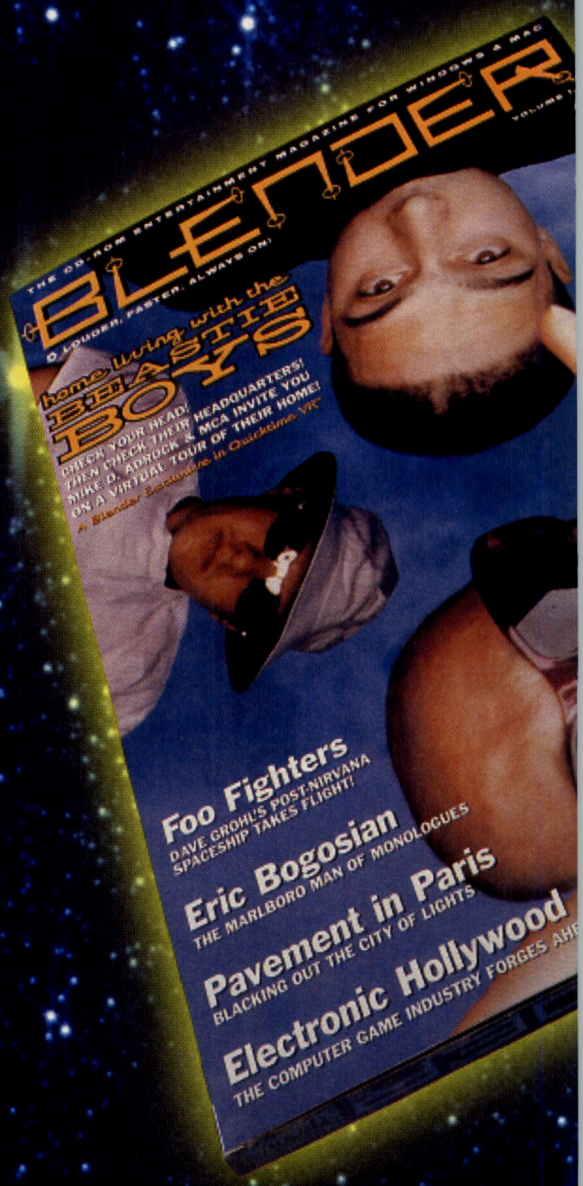
You can still have up to 46 human players, but this was before networks and modems became fashionable, so you'd actually have to have them there in the room with you, and frankly I don't know anyone with that many cans of lager in their fridge. You can also still play teams from Italy and Scotland but let's face it, that was hardly the game's biggest selling point first time round. It's all simply outdated, in every sense, and you really are better off saving up for *Championship Manager 2* instead.

SCORE ●●
PRICE £9.99



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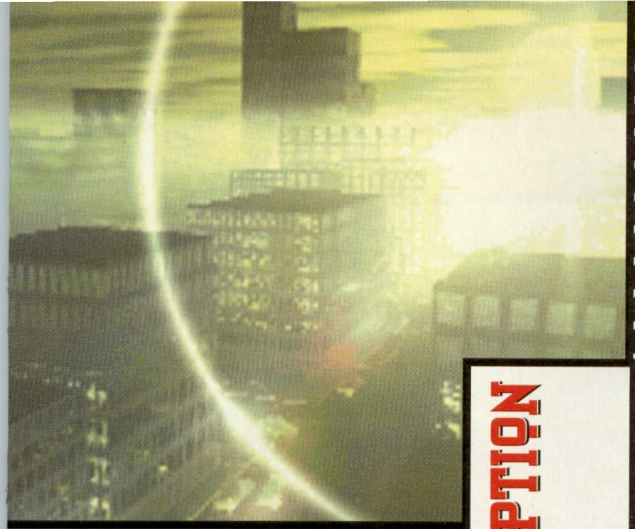
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PRODU



Yet again, *PC Zone* tackles the problem of which joystick you should go out and spend your money on. Seeing as flight sims need the things more than anything else, this time we've set our resident propeller head **Simon Bradley** the unenviable task of wiggling and twiddling his way through a huge pile of seriously dodgy looking sticks.

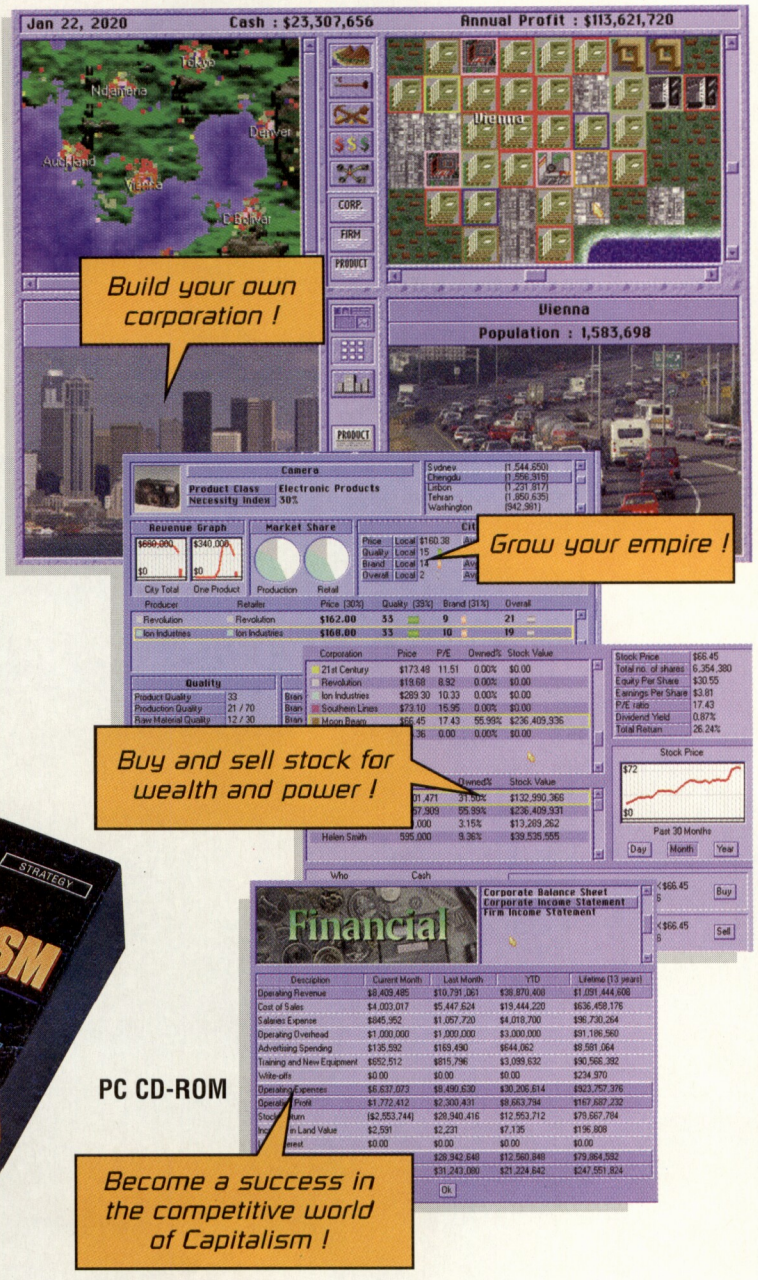
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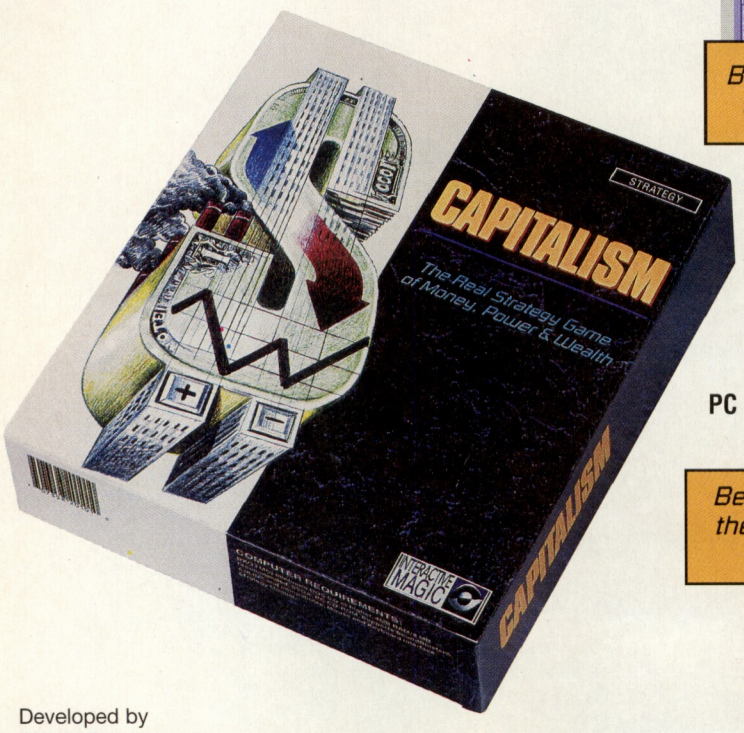
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PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

HOW MANY ADD-ons can you buy which come in as many different shapes, sizes, colours and price ranges as the humble joystick? And there are surely even fewer nigh-on essential pieces of leisure hardware which aren't supplied as standard when you buy a multimedia PC from your friendly neighbourhood superstore.

Starting off with what may seem just a tad obvious, what is a joystick and how does it work? Well, at its crudest, it's four switches which get pressed by paddles on the bottom of a stick. Move the stick in any direction, and it will press one or more buttons which in turn send a signal to the PC saying, 'Hey, I've been pressed!'. The circuitry on the game card then translates this into a signal the game can use, and the software makes the movement happen in the game. That is the way that a digital stick works, and is fine for arcade games and the like, where all you really need is a fast response to your frantic commands. In reality, though, this is no better than using the keyboard (apart from being a lot more comfortable) if you want even a little bit of delicacy in your control.

So now we move onto the next option. In an analogue stick, the little switches have been replaced by a device called a potentiometer which sends a signal saying, 'Hey, I've been pressed a little bit/some way/really hard!' and lets your game card sort that out as well. This results in a degree of proportional control, and means that you can fly around with a bit of finesse, rather than just over-controlling into the nearest mountain.

The next logical development is to fit more buttons. Now game cards (and games) will all support two buttons, known spookily as buttons 1 and 2. If you start putting extra buttons on a stick, they either continue to act as buttons 1 and 2, or they need a bit of cleverness to fool the PC into thinking that they are keys. As a result, you find yourself with a programmable stick which has a whole gang of buttons on it and can be used to type letters if you're clever enough with the programming. Then, of course, you want to control your views with a coolie hat, which is programmable as well.

That's all very well for basics, but for real sophistication you're going to need a separate throttle. This may be a wheel or slider on the bottom of your stick, but could equally be another unit completely. Either way, this puts extra demand on your game card as to all intents and purposes it works as a second joystick. If you buy a separate throttle, expect it to be laden with extra buttons, and probably be programmable as well. You can open a serious can of worms here, so be warned.

Finally, if you're going for the ultimate in realism, you'll need a set of rudder pedals. These are surprisingly straightforward, and act as the other axis of your second joystick. Some have the facility to tilt as well as swivel, and are ace for driving games. They can also act as toe brakes (for the wheels) on some simulators.

Okay, what are we looking at then? Well, as I have something of a propeller head reputation, it seems sensible that I should concentrate on a round-up of the best control systems for the serious PC pilot. Each of the sticks, throttles and pedals reviewed were tested with a simple aerobatic sequence in the SU-31 in *Flight Unlimited*, landing the F-18 on a carrier in *Marine Fighters*, and flying three touch and go circuits in *Su-27 Flanker*. Then we'll have a look at any peculiar features of each, before coming up with the best combination depending on your budget.

The sticks fall into two distinct categories – those with throttle controls and those without. Needless to say, all the sticks featured are analogue. All the throttles reviewed are programmable, so that's easy, and there are only three pedal sets anyway.



CH FLIGHTSTICK PRO

PRICE	£69.95
BUTTONS	4
COOLIE HAT	1
SOFTWARE	Y
PROGRAMMABLE	N
QUALITY	4
OVERALL SCORE	88%

An old stager, the Flightstick Pro has been around for at least three years. Although it could hardly be described as pretty, it's well made and has a pleasing air of quality and solidity about it. It has four buttons arranged on the top, as well as a coolie hat. The throttle is a wheel to the left of the bottom, which is a bummer if you're left-handed but fine otherwise.

ALFA COMMANDER

PRICE	£29.95
BUTTONS	4
COOLIE HAT	Y
SOFTWARE	N
PROGRAMMABLE	Y
QUALITY	1
OVERALL SCORE	70%

A newcomer, this is an interesting device offering four buttons, a coolie hat and throttle and rudder sliders in one unit. It's completely programmable and allows the user to set four different games and select them on demand with a base switch. Build quality isn't brilliant but it's a good value entry level flightstick.



PC ZONE CLASSIC

GRAVIS ANALOGUE PRO

PRICE	£39.99
BUTTONS	2
COOLIE HAT	N
SOFTWARE	Y
PROGRAMMABLE	N
QUALITY	3
OVERALL SCORE	90%

Another old timer, I confess that I'm not even sure that this stick is still being manufactured. Having said that, I know that it is still available through several retail and mail order outlets, and is worth a serious look. The buttons are arranged in a slightly peculiar way, and the whole thing looks kind of odd, but there is no doubt that it works. It's well made and has a throttle wheel in the base which is quite easy to use.


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CH F16 RANGE

PRICE	£54.95 to £109.95
BUTTONS	4
COOLIE HAT	4
SOFTWARE	Y
PROGRAMMABLE	Y
QUALITY	5
OVERALL SCORE (PRO STICK)	**90%**

So new that it's not yet on sale here, this is the stick that CH hopes will knock Thrustmaster off its perch. It doesn't look as sexy as the opposition, in fact it's pretty unattractive. It also looks rather less like the real thing. However, the ergonomics are slightly better, the mouldings are of a better quality and the programming language is a doddle. The action of the stick itself is excellent and the whole thing works far better than you'd expect, judging it on looks alone. And it's half the price of the Thrustmaster. Just for good measure, all the CH F16 sticks have a throttle as well.



PC ZONE CLASSIC

SUNCOM F15 RANGE

PRICE	£19.99 to £149.99
BUTTONS	4
COOLIE HAT	2
SOFTWARE	Y
PROGRAMMABLE	Y
QUALITY	4
OVERALL SCORE (EAGLE)	**87%**

The four Suncom F15 sticks are all very similar, differing in program modes and button functions only. The top of the range Eagle has all the features you could ask for, is fully programmable and looks the bees knees as well. These sticks are claimed to be replicas of the real F15 column, which doesn't seem unreasonable. Although they lack the weight of their top-end rivals, they are large and solid. The buttons don't feel as sturdy as the sticks on offer from the two American companies, but nonetheless seem pretty good for the money. The top-end Eagle is particularly well-specced and is different enough to be worth a serious look. Pity the side switch is only a toggle, though...

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED



PC ZONE CLASSIC

THRUSTMASTER FLCS

PRICE	£199.99
BUTTONS	4
COOLIE HAT	4
SOFTWARE	Y
PROGRAMMABLE	Y
QUALITY	5
OVERALL SCORE	**95%**

What can I say about this beast that hasn't been said already? Take everything about the standard FCS and double it. At least. This is a full-size copy of the stick in the F16, and I reckon that it must cost about the same as well. It will do quite literally anything you want. You can even type letters with it – we are talking programmable with a capital P. The action is quite superb, and the placement of the buttons and coolie hats (yes, four of them in one shape or another) is excellent. But, of course, there is a catch: the FLCS will set you back £200 or thereabouts, and the programming interface isn't that good. But that's the only complaint.

standard sticks

THRUSTMASTER FCS

PRICE	£99.99
BUTTONS	4
COOLIE HAT	Y
SOFTWARE	Y
PROGRAMMABLE	N
QUALITY	4
OVERALL SCORE	**90%**

Ah, an old faithful. It pains me to say that I actually bought one of these a few years back. This is the original, seminal serious simulator stick, the benchmark that all the others have to line up against. Even now, five years on, it still performs as well as the best in most respects. In its 'pro' guise it gained ferocious springs and a metal base to stand firm in the most bitter of dogfights, while in the latest MkII form it has acquired a gaiter round the base which is completely pointless and looks crap. But it still performs, even if it is still on the ugly side.

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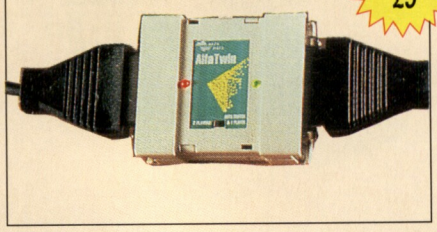


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throttles



PC ZONE Classic CLASSIC

CH PRO THROTTLE

PRICE	£109.95
BUTTONS	4
COOLIE HAT	3
SOFTWARE	Y
PROGRAMMABLE	Y
QUALITY	5
OVERALL	**94%**

Having done a fair job of making a programmable throttle, CH must have then decided to go for the jugular, because it tweaked it further to produce the Pro Throttle. Same basic design but more programmable, this gadget means that you can take any joystick you like and program it. That makes for the maximum possible value for money, because you can take your existing stick and do whatever you want with it. Also, you get more functions than before with the same easy-to-use programming language. Excellent.



PC ZONE Classic CLASSIC

THRUSTMASTER TQS

PRICE	£199.99
BUTTONS	7
COOLIE HAT	Y
SOFTWARE	Y
PROGRAMMABLE	Y
QUALITY	5
OVERALL SCORE	**93%**

Not wanting to be outdone by their colleagues in flight controls, the throttle development team at Thrustmaster soon joined in the 'We can make huge and ridiculously complex devices as well' and came up with the TQS. This really is the mother of all throttles – it will do more than you will ever want. It has a coolie hat type pointer by the thumb so that you can manually aim your Mavericks in *Falcon 4*, it has multiple 'everythings' in the programming language, and it costs more than the National Debt of a small African state. But then, you can't have everything, can you?

THRUSTMASTER WCS 2

PRICE	£159.99
BUTTONS	7
COOLIE HAT	N
SOFTWARE	Y
PROGRAMMABLE	Y
QUALITY	5
OVERALL SCORE	**89%**

Well, again here we have the throttle that started it all. Although there were throttle sticks before this came out, the original WCS was the first dedicated throttle on the market. It was also the first programmable device out there, so a respectful nod is due in its direction. As with all Thrustmaster products, it has aged well and oozes quality from every orifice. However, the programming language is a little flaky and the whole thing can prove a bit of a sod to get working properly. Despite this, I have one at home and I still use it a lot of the time as it's pretty damn good.



CH THROTTLE

PRICE	£89.95
BUTTONS	6
COOLIE HAT	Y
SOFTWARE	Y
PROGRAMMABLE	Y
QUALITY	5
OVERALL SCORE	**92%**

The guys (and girls) at CH have played 'catch up' with Thrustmaster for longer than I can remember when it comes down to serious simulator controls, but until now they've never had a separate throttle. That's all changed with this gadget, though. It has a slightly different action, being a slider rather than a traditional throttle, and it doesn't have the 'lifted out of the cockpit' look of the Thrustmaster. But it really scores on the ease with which it can be programmed, and the quality is well up on anything else around.

PC ZONE Classic CLASSIC



PC ZONE Recommended RECOMMENDED

pedals



CH PEDALS

PRICE	£59.95
OVERALL SCORE	80%

This is the second set of pedals offered by CH, following the introduction of its Pro Pedals last year. They look pretty much the same as the earlier release, but don't offer the swivel and tilt options of the more expensive version. It still looks a little odd, but uses little space and works just fine.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

PRO PEDALS

PRICE	£109.95
OVERALL SCORE	90%

These caused a bit of a stir in the simulation freak community when they hit the scene, not least because they look so damn odd. Basically, take a typically large CH joystick base, saw the stick off and glue on a set of pedals and you'll get the general idea of what I mean. Despite the odd looks, these pedals work well and offer the added bonus of tilting, making them ideal for driving games. They also use no more space than their basic footprint, which is a major plus for the maniacally untidy gamers among you.

THRUSTMASTER RCS

PRICE	£79.99
OVERALL SCORE	89%

The original, and certainly the best looking of the rudder systems on the market, this is a no-frills device that manages to look like something that actually belongs in the cockpit and offers a really authentic feel to its action as well as looks. It's well made, but not cheap, and it needs a lot of floor space to be used comfortably. And if you store things under your desk like I do, that could be a problem.



PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

THE VERDICT

It became apparent that there was a distinct group of excellence in this collection, especially where the sticks were concerned. The offerings from CH and Thrustmaster stood head and shoulders above the rest, although the others were not generally that bad and would be quite acceptable in less exhalted company.

The Suncom sticks produced a fair performance, but were let down by a vagueness around the neutral position which seemed impossible to tune out. However, in their favour they are easy to program and offer loads of features, some of which are pretty good.

The Thrustmaster offerings are of a very high standard, although I'm not sure that the build quality is as solid as it used to be, and the programming language is massively non user-friendly. But, and it is a big but, everything worth flying supports it directly.

CH has got the edge on build quality and cost, and it's well up there with control, but it trails as far as looks go. Now to most people looks don't matter to a great extent, but it could be a deciding factor for the more aesthetically-minded out there. Programming is a piece of cake (in fact, both CH and Suncom seem to use the same program) and the ergonomics are way ahead. That leaves us with the Alfa Commander; as it's a pre-production stick it wouldn't be fair to accuse it of being poor quality – the finished product may be an improvement. I want to like it because it's a great idea, but unfortunately it's vague, imprecise and flimsy; control is sloppy and the whole thing is uncomfortable to use.

So, my choice?

Skint: Flightstick Pro if you're not too badly off.

Doing okay: One of the low-end Suncoms plus CH Throttle, probably. Maybe Flightstick Pro and CH Throttle instead.

Comfortable: Either a CH F16 and Pro Throttle, Thrustmaster FCS/WCS2 combo or a mix of these, plus CH Pedals.

Money no object: Thrustmaster F16 FLCS and TQS with pedals.

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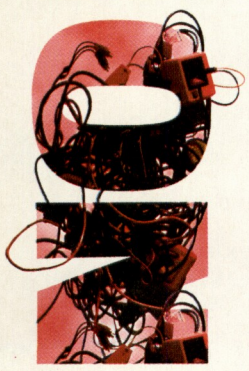
GRAVIS™
PLAY TO WIN

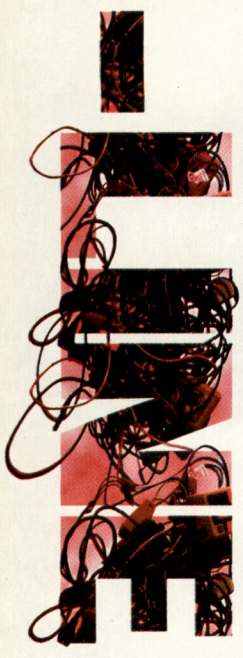
Advanced Gravis Europe. Antennestraat 70, 1322 AS, Almere, The Netherlands, Tel: 0031 36 5364443, Fax: 0031 36 5366011

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There's no bigger twat than a cybertwat. No uglier a head than a Nethead. Definitely no poncier a git than a beer-bellied fat arse with no hair, a goatee, and – oh look, a pierced nipple! – spanking his plank endlessly about the Internet and 'virtual worlds' in a really loud posh voice while he sits smugly sipping his Japanese bottled beer and smoking Gitanes in an over-dark over-expensive 'concept bar' in Soho. How can you get your own back? Easy – put a 'virtual' fist down his goddamn fat-lipped gullet... and bluff him to death.

ZONE





Special

bluffers guide to the Internet

YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE. YOU'RE AT A PARTY, A FEW BEERS and a pint of Amaretto in the old stomach. There's this girl, right. Very attractive, very trendy. You fancy your chances. You sidle over, introduce yourself, get talking. She's really into 'surfing' (we'll let that one pass), she's on Demon (er, some new kind of club drug?), and she absolutely loves Douglas Coupland (er...) – but she's beginning to notice your glassy-eyed expression (brought about not just by the Amaretto). Here comes the crunch...

HER: We've got a PoP at work.
YOU: Yeah? Cool.
HER: Do you know what a PoP is?
YOU: Yeah, 'course.
HER: What is it then?
YOU: Er...

Game over man.

INTERNET INTERSCHMET

Maxtrix, Digital Interstate, Information Superhighway, Cyberspace, Infobahn – call it what you will, the Internet is here. On telly, in the papers, at parties. And whaddya know? You don't know a thing about it. You don't even understand it. You have no idea what the Internet is. But don't worry, you're not alone – nobody really knows about the Internet. If somebody says they do, they're talking crap. Cybertwats, nob-ends, journalists, trendies, advertising execs, the Labour Party – they haven't a clue what they're spouting on about. They just do it to make you look stupid while they look cool. But we're on to them and that's why we've prepared this Bluffer's Guide To The Internet, so you can steer your way through PoPs, FTPs, and alt.sex.not.getting.any with minimum embarrassment and maximum impact.

HISTORY

Okay, we'll start with History. It's of paramount importance that you understand that the Internet actually emerged as a result of the American government's paranoia during the height of the Cold War in the '60s. They reckoned if the Commies launched a nuclear strike that knocked out communications, their ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency – memorise this) would survive, it being a wide area network (similar to a local area network found in most offices only, er, wider). Of course, after an all-out thermo-nuclear war, logging on to Demon and downloading a picture of Dannii Minogue's tits would be the last thing on anybody's mind, but they missed that.

REMEMBER: Cold War, ARPANET, Wide Area Network, and that Dannii Minogue gag

TODAY

The National Science Foundation then created the Computer Science Network (CSNET) in 1982 for use by computer scientists, followed by the larger NSFNET in 1983 which linked the NSF's five supercomputers located around the US. This was then superseded by a speedier, wider reaching network in 1988. By 1992 the new network was already becoming overloaded, hence the introduction of yet another one, which has become the backbone of the Internet as it's known today. Gosh.

REMEMBER: 1992, CSNET, NSFNET (liberal usage of those acronyms should automatically shut them up)

HOW IT WORKS

Data is transferred across the Internet using an enormously complicated set-up of phone lines, satellites and specific Internet cabling. Information that is to be sent or received has to be broken down into data packets containing the necessary addresses and information on how to reassemble it once it has reached its destination. Connections between vastly different sorts of computers are made possible because they are all forced to use the same language, or 'protocol', called TCP/IP (see our Jargon Buster section for more details). This allows your humble PC in grubby Grimsby to connect to a PC in sunny San Diego as if it were in the next room (of course in the old days before digital phone lines this was the equivalent of shouting the code of a program down a rolled-up newspaper).

REMEMBER: Data packets, protocols, TCP/IP (do NOT make a joke about popular disinfectants with a similar name)

HOW DO YOU GET ON* IT?

Service providers operate their own dedicated connections to the Internet and through them you can connect your own PC to the Internet – for a price. Choice of provider is one of the most important aspects to consider and it's essential for the

sake of your phone bill that you can get a local connection, rather than having to make a long distance call. The majority of information on the Internet is free; all you should pay for is your time on the phone and a monthly connection fee to your provider. Some charge a flat monthly rate – from as little as £10 – while others charge a basic fee for a certain amount of Internet time per month (ie 25 hours), and then charge extra if you go over that. The second type tends to be more expensive. When you sign up with your service provider you will normally receive all the necessary software for browsing the World Wide Web, setting up an e-mail address, joining newsgroups and transferring files.

If you're not on 'the Net' and somebody asks you who you're 'with', say either:

a) A cool provider like Demon, CIX, or Cerebus

b) Make up a provider's name but make it sound really spacey, sci-fi and alternative. Recommended choices: CyberWow, Babylonia, Anarchy, BlackCat. Usage: "Yah, I'm Funky at Ninjascopic <dot> co <dot> you know the rest – hah hah!").

REMEMBER: Providers and a cool provider name

WHAT DO YOU DO THEN?

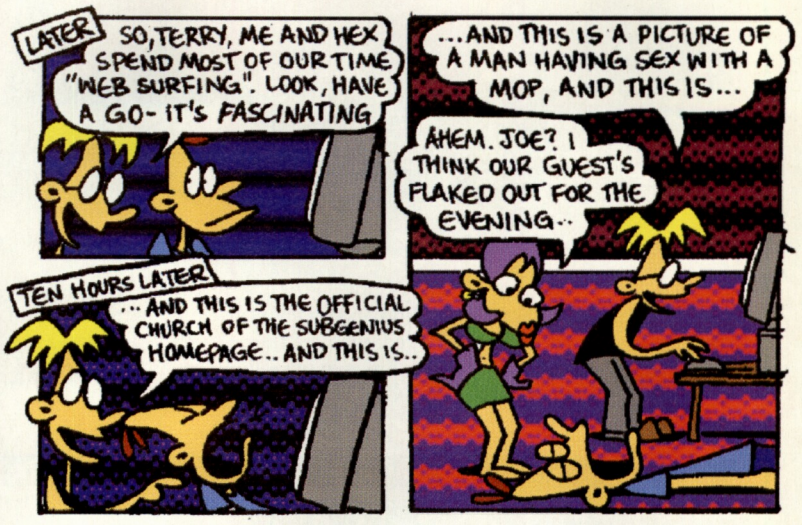
By using a service provider your PC actually becomes part of the Internet. If you don't think you want this (or just don't understand how this can be...) you can connect to the Internet through other on-line services like CIX (Compulink Information Exchange), CompuServe, or the Microsoft Network. As well as providing their own range of special services these let you access certain Internet features, such as e-mail and file transfer, but won't allow you to directly access the World Wide Web.

REMEMBER: CIX, CompuServe, Microsoft Network (memorise the fact that these are NOT the Internet, and if you make the faux pas of saying so, you will suffer much vacuous posh laughter and bobbing of ponytails)

AND WHAT'S ON THERE?

The range of information that can be found on the Internet is enormous. With conservative estimates quoting 30 million users connecting regularly (other sources reckon nearer 50 million with at least three quarters downloading porn) you're bound to find someone who shares similar interests to your own. There are Web sites dedicated to anything and everything, from *Melrose Place* to virtual shopping malls. Or you can try one of the 18000 odd newsgroups covering subjects from the deification of Anna Nicole Smith's orbs to the History Of Clogs (Wooden) Parts 001–0121. If you're having trouble finding the information you want there is even a variety of search engines that will run off and find the information for you.

REMEMBER: 30 to 50 million users, 'virtual shopping malls' (v. poncey), and the History Of Clogs (Wooden)



Internet addresses

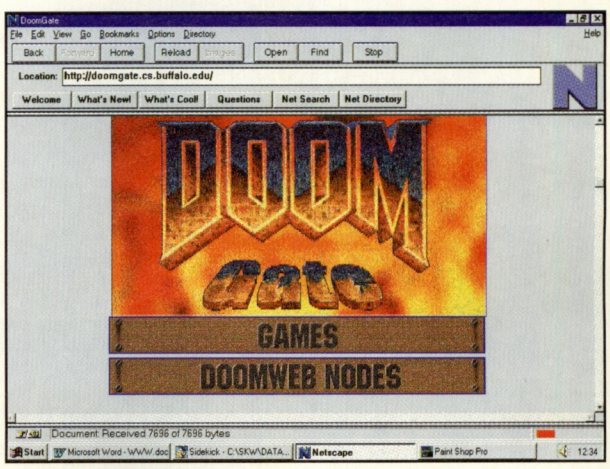
Internet addresses are as fussy and complicated as you would expect for such an arcane system – you have to get every bit exactly right if your message is to reach the right mail box or you want to download the correct Web page. And as we don't swap numbers with potential sexual partners these days, you must learn to remember and interpret these addresses.

The best way to explain how these addresses work is to look at specific examples. For instance, my e-mail address might be `pierced-idiot@stomp-flyer.co.uk` (but it's not). The first part is the name of my mailbox on the office network (`pierced-idiot`). After the @ symbol comes the domain containing the name of the computer linked to the Internet (in this case our workstation `stomp-flyer`). The '`uk`' obviously denotes the country in which the computer is located, and '`co`' means it is a company. You might find other addresses with '`com`' (for a US company), '`org`' (an organisation), '`ac`' (an academic institution), or '`gov`' (a government address).

World Wide Web Internet addresses work differently. They usually start with how the information is to be accessed, usually '`HTTP`' for hypertext or `FTP` for file transfers. This, for some reason, is followed by '`://`' and the name of the computer the information is coming from.

For example, `http://www.movies.net/index.html` takes you to a movie information Web site. The address tells the PC that the required pages are called index and can be accessed as hyper text (`.html`), on the machine called '`www`', belonging to the '`movies.net`' organisation.

Note:
It is imperative that you use the preposition 'on' instead of 'in' or 'with'. Do not say "I'm in the Internet" or "We're with the Net".
The 'on' word provides a sense of immediacy and treacherous balance that might otherwise reveal the slightly sad, non-real-time pace of it all.



world wide Web

When most people think they know something about the Internet and go on and on about the funky screenshots of weird graphics and cool pictures they've seen, the chances are that the stupid twats are actually talking about only one part of the Internet – the World Wide Web.

WHAT THE -?

The Web was specifically designed to appeal to a much wider audience than the tossy old-school DOS interfaces originally used to send and receive documents over the Internet. Divided up into 'sites' and 'home pages' (basically the same thing), the Web allows multimedia displays to be downloaded to any PC connected to the Internet and equipped with a 'Web browser' (like Netscape). Being divided into pages with full colour graphics, the Web looks and feels far more like printed pages in a magazine – but instead of having to flick, Web sites contain 'hyperlinks', or jumping off points, to other related sites where you can download software, text files, and video or audio clips. Click your mouse on a hyperlink and your PC will take you there automatically and download the relevant pages.

HOW THE -?

To make your way around the Web you need a Web browser to provide you with a simple point-and-click interface to this part of the Internet; it also saves users having to cope with the indecipherable commands previously needed to get from one place to another. Browsers can be used under all the common operating systems including UNIX, Macintosh, Windows and OS/2, as long as the computer it is being used on has SLIP or PPP access (see our Jargon Buster section). The most widely used browser currently available is Netscape; early versions of this software are free and can be downloaded from Netscape's Web site at `http://home.netscape.com/`, although this won't be any use if you don't already have access to the Web.

WHY THE -?

Of course you don't get pretty pictures and tarted-up text for nothing, and the price you pay for using the World Wide Web is the excruciatingly slow rate at which some pages download. Basically, the bigger the graphics on a page, the longer it will take, and the more people accessing the page, the slower your connection. This means that popular pages, like porn sites, can be impossibly slow – especially if you're connecting at the same time as our transatlantic cousins in the US.

WHEN THE -?

The Web is only around three years old, but innovations are constantly emerging. Web developers have already decided that the existing Web sites are dull and unimaginative, due to the HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) used to design the pages and embed the hyperlinks. A year ago, at the first World Wide Web conference in Switzerland, specifications were proposed for VRML (Virtual Reality Modelling Language), which is set to take the Web by storm over the next year. VRML, having been worked on extensively by the Silicon Graphics boffins, will apparently allow standard 486-based PCs with merely a 14,400bps modem to fly through virtual 3D worlds in the shape of cities, museums, shopping malls or allegedly (but not very interestingly), tourist resorts. This will effectively put an end to the flat 2D images that people thought were so cool.

Internet access, especially to the World Wide Web, could become a common feature of your boring old TV. Philips has already announced plans to launch its CD-Online Internet service consisting of a modem that plugs into a standard CD-i player with its own Web browser. Several cable television companies are also now offering connections through your television set using their existing cable networks, which should offer faster access times than phone-based modems.

SITES

The best way to find something on the World Wide Web that will sustain your interest is to hook up to it and look for yourself. To get you under way we've put together a decidedly non-definitive list of starting points you may think worth considering. Remember that new sites are being opened and old ones closed all the time, so we make no apologies if some of the addresses refuse to do anything exciting.

Yahoo: A Guide to WWW
`http://www.yahoo.com`
Nicely categorized guide to what's on the Web with everything in its proper place, including a fair few 'adult' references.

Whole Internet Catalogue
`http://www.gnn.com/wic/newrescat.toc.html`

WebCrawler Searching
`http://webcrawler.com/`
Powerful searching tool that trawls a huge database of sites for key words.

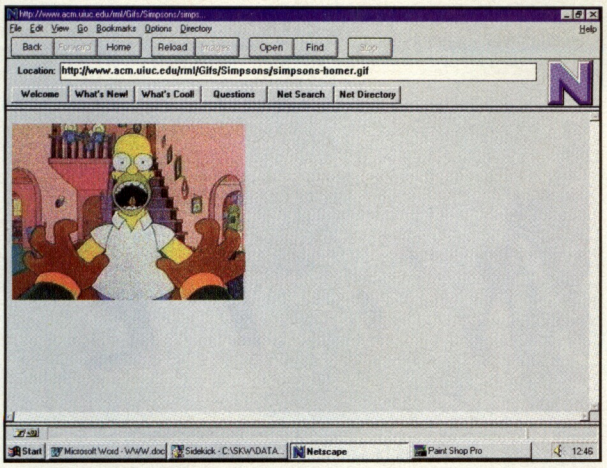
DoomGate
`http://doomgate.cs.buffalo.edu/`
If *Doom* is your destiny...

Nathan Cochran's Home Page
`http://wantree.com.au:80/gamewave/`
Enticing library of reviews and game related articles from a freelance journalist.

Games Domain
`http://wclrs/bham.ac.uk/GamesDomain`
Central Internet warehouse for gaming information, lists of FAQs and other games news.

Gopher menu for games sites
`gopher://sol.csd.unb.ca/11/FAQ/rec/games/`

Happy Puppy
`http://happypuppy.com/games/lordsoth/index.html`
Happily tells you it covers nearly 1000 games.



(Left) Most Web browsie type people use NetScape. There are others, notably Mosaic and Web Surfer, and you can also find some freeware ones floating about.

Usenet FAQs
http://www.cis.ohio-state.edu/hypertext/faq/usenet/PC-games-faq/top.html
List of gaming FAQs.

The Gamers Ledge
http://www.medio.net/users/mgodsey/games.html
Games reviews, demos, and downloads galore.

Strategic Simulation Gaming Home Page
http://world.std.com/~ctate/strategy.html
Site dedicated to anoraks.

Klingon Language Institute
http://www.kli.org/klihome.html
Practice the ever popular Klingon language with your friends.

The Devil's Dictionary
http://www.vestnett.no/cgi-bin/devil

Lockpicking
http://www.lysator.liu.se/mit-guide.html
Advice on cracking a huge variety of locks.

Banned Books
http://www.cs.cmu.edu/Web/People/spok/banned-books.html
Get your hands on texts censored and banned by today's totalitarian regimes.

Hong Kong Movies Home Page
http://www.mdstud.chalmers.se/hkmovie/
All you could ever want to know about the world of gore-filled chopsocky movies.

The Simpsons
http://turtle.ncsa.uiuc.edu/alan/simpsons.html
Compulsory pages for Homer fans. Download sound files and the obligatory icons for your hard disk.

The Sci-Fi Channel
http://www.scifi.com/

Vibe Magazine
http://www.vibe.com/

USENET NEWSGROUPS

The thousands of Usenet NewsGroups are more functional and interesting places on the Net. While the press and that fat arse with the goatee go on about the WWW and all that crap, other more down to earth and cool people 'chat' on Usenet (we use 'down to earth' and 'cool' in the most flexible sense).

Basically, there are around 19,000 newgroups, with new ones being created every day. They cover more or less every subject possible, from Vaisnava spirtual traditions to T J Hooker, from Radish Therapy to *Doom*. Operation is simple: you 'tune' your OLR (Off Line Reader) to a conference which pursues your interests, download the existing message base (some groups have been going for years and their messages are well over the 10,000 mark), and then start contributing your own brand of sassy British wit and sarcasm.

Unlike moderated conferences on CIX and CompuServe, Usenet is rarely censored or edited, so a warning for the faint-hearted, the language can get a little 'salty' at times. Z

Jargon buster

With the popularity of sci-fi like acronyms applied to anything vaguely linked to the Internet, you could be forgiven for thinking that it's populated by a bunch of old dickheads. And you'd be right. A high proportion of elitist tossers can be found sadly lurking on the Internet all the bloody time, but you can now argue with them on an equal footing about the relevant merits of PPP over TCP/IP with the Zone Bluffer's Guide to Internet Bollocks.

Archie: Short for 'archive'
Indexes FTP sites so you know what's downloadable.

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions
'Required' reading before entering discussion forums or newsgroups. Usually put together by aspiring Internet 'celebrities' and populated with substantially unfunny 'gags' (ie 'TCP/IP – good for cuts and grazes').

FTP: File Transfer Protocol
If you want files from another PC, this is the basic way to transfer them across the Internet.

Gopher
'Easy to use' menu–based interface for locating information.

HTML
The language used to create Web pages.

HTTP: Hypertext transfer protocol
The way Web pages are viewed (that's as much as we understand).

IRC: Internet Relay Chat
Service that lets users join rooms or 'channels' to communicate via keyboard. Beware: this is where 'dodgy' people hang out.

PoP: Point of Presence
Phone number you dial to access an Internet service. Pronounced 'P of P' it should not to be confused with...

POP: Post Office Protocol
How you transfer e–mail from your service provider.

PPP: Point to Point protocol
The dialect of TCP/IP that your PC sends down your modem to your service provider.

ROFL: Rolling On the Floor Laughing
Posted as a reply to a funny comment or to butter up somebody you want work from.

RTFM: Read The Fucking Manual
Self–explanatory and rather blunt really. A comment reserved for those who have obviously pirated the software they are using, or for blind Internet users.

SLIP: Serial–line Internet Protocol
Similar to PPP but more limited and not as fast.

TCP/IP: Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol
The language governing Internet communications (do NOT make the obvious joke).

URL: Uniform Resource Locator
It's another name for a Web address, thickie.

Veronica: Very Easy Rodent–Oriented Netwide Index to Computerised Archives
Another search tool. A very sad person with a beard spent hours thinking that one up.

WAIS: Wide Area Information Server
Automated Internet search that locates documents with key words. Try: lactation, facials, and clogs.

WWW: World Wide Web
The name given to the mass of HTML documents available on the Internet that are accessible from HTTP or Web servers.

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The call costs 39p a minute cheap rate and 49p at all other times (maximum costs £3.00). Please get permission from the person paying the bill. Competition starts October 1st.

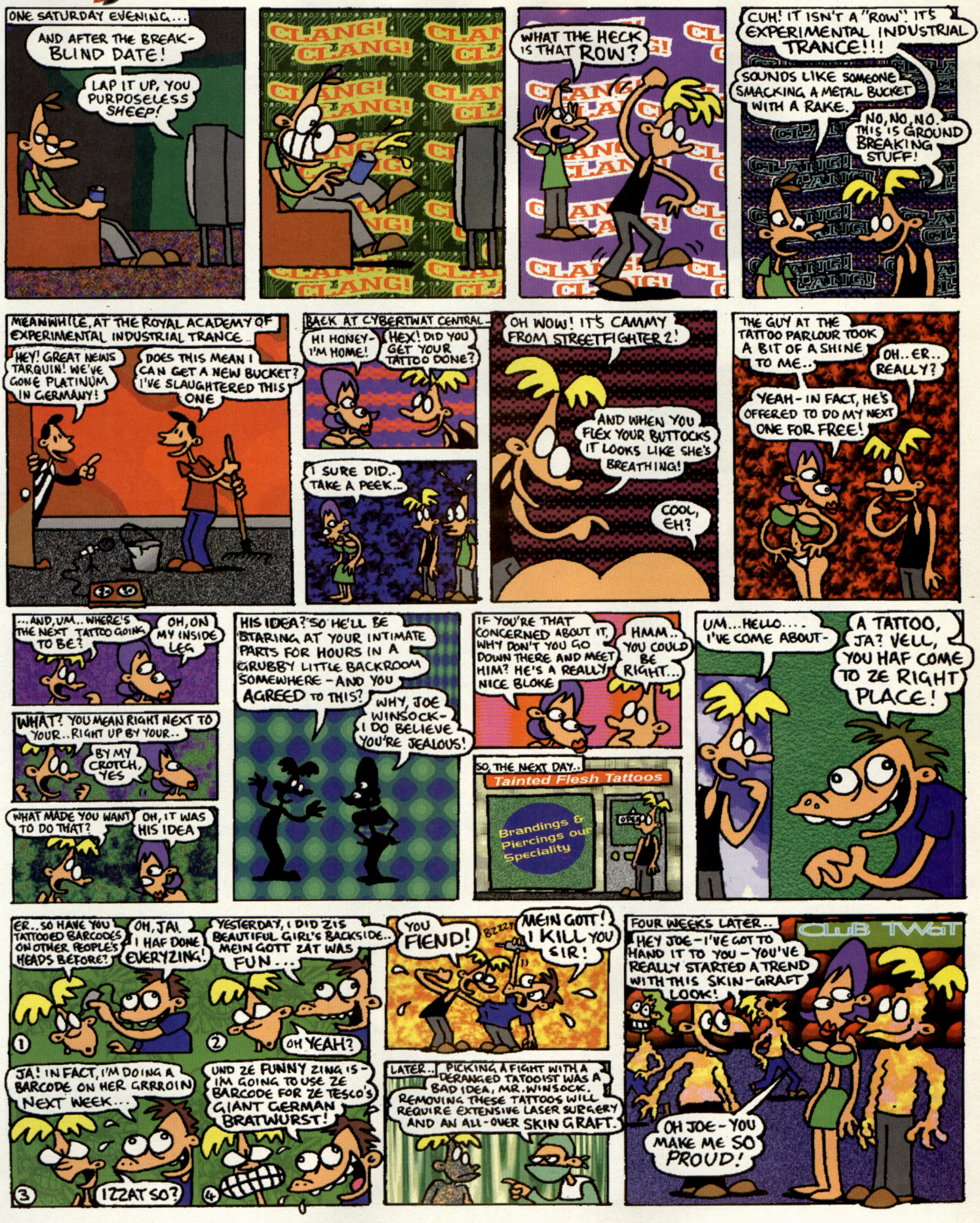
ALSO ON CD-i

© 1995 TripMedia Limited. © 1995 Philips Interactive Media International Limited. © 1995 Simon Boswell.

PHILIPS

The Cybertwats

furnished by Charliebrooker created



Brother Solo P75

Dave Mathieson's got no friends but he does have a brother, so we thought this PC sounded rather apt.

There seems to be two schools of thought in the area of PC design. The first is the usual 'stuff all the bits into a beige box with a few lights on the front' approach that we all know and love. This pleases techie types, as it makes them feel that they're the proud owner of a 'proper' computer, with all the meatiness that goes with it.

The other approach is to make the PC look a bit cuddly and as unintimidating as possible so that it appeals to the family market (you know, those families in the adverts where the kids get A+ for their homework by using a couple of educational CD-ROMs while their parents stand behind them looking smug). Whoops. There I go again, being cynical. What's wrong with PCs looking nice anyway?

All in one

The first thing you think when you take a look at the Brother Solo is 'Ooh! Isn't it compact?'. There's no system unit as such, as the PC bits share the same box as the monitor (which, incidentally, weighs a sodding ton). The floppy and quad-speed CD-ROM drives are built into the front, as well as a headphone socket and volume control for the audio part of the machine.

While this integration looks nice and tidy, the main disadvantage of having the PC and monitor combined like this is that you can't upgrade the latter, and while the Brother's screen is perfectly usable, I've seen better ones fitted to some conventional PCs.

One of the things that puts the more technical-minded punter off 'home' machines like the Solo is the fear that it may be filled with all sorts of horrible non-standard components that make upgrading a nightmare. However, Brother has wisely chosen not to follow this route, fitting a standard motherboard with spare ISA and PCI slots, as well as room for more RAM. What's more, getting your grubby hands on the insides is a breeze, as, once you've removed some screws, the whole PC bit is on a pretty nifty hinged unit that just pulls out.

The sound card is a standard 16-bit SoundBlaster clone, and the internal speakers, while not ear-shattering, give good enough sound quality (you can always attach something heftier through the headphone socket if you like annoying people).

On the performance side, a P75 is good enough for most games, giving a decent frame rate in titles like *Doom* and *Descent*. If SVGA flight sims are your thing, though, you'll need a P90; *US Navy Fighters* on the Brother, for example, caused the jerky demons to come out and play. The hard disk isn't particularly fast, which doesn't make a huge difference to the gamer but is nevertheless noticeable when using Windows.

Overall, then, the Brother is a nice-looking, well-integrated piece of PC. While it's not as fast or cheap as some, it'll appeal to the more fashion-conscious punter. However, if you take great pride in having the highest *Doom* frame rate on the block, you'll be better off looking elsewhere. Z



Score

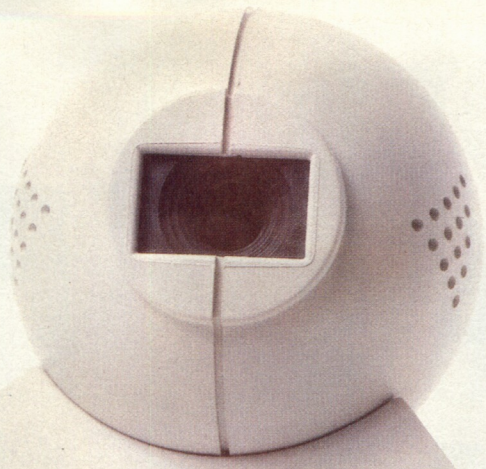
73

A groovy-looking PC that's not quite as fast as the competition.

Price: £1399 excl VAT **Release Date:** Out now
Manufacturer: Brother
Tel: 01279 416888 (Mail order only)

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Love looking at yourself in the mirror? Dave Mathleson does, so we gave him a gadget that made him realise quite how lovely he is.



Connectix QuickCam

RIGHT, FIRST OF ALL, THIS PARTICULAR bit of kit has nothing whatsoever to do with playing games. But it is nevertheless pretty smart – besides, *Zone* readers are known for their appreciation of the groovier things in life, so read on.

We're all used to seeing the titchy little video clips that are included in loads of games and multimedia titles, but most of them are rubbish as the subject matter is invariably something important or useful. What could be better than seeing these same video clips, but featuring your own mates? (Quite a lot of things, actually.) Anyway, the QuickCam is a rather nifty little camera which simply plugs into your PC and can capture both still images and video clips.

Private eye

The camera itself is a kind of spherical plastic eyeball that looks like it's been salvaged from one of those droid breakers yards in the *Star Wars* films. Obviously, round things are well known for their rolling properties, so Connectix has thoughtfully provided a triangular base to keep the camera in place, which means that you can put it on top of your monitor.

Live video is one of those things that sounds like it involves shitloads of hassle, but luckily, apart from the 'Cam' bit of its name, the 'Quick' in QuickCam is also apt. Setting the thing up is simply a matter of plugging the cable into your printer port, and inserting another adaptor thing between your keyboard cable and the keyboard socket in your PC. Run the install program (which comes on a single floppy), and it's time to enter the land of pulling silly faces and making obscene gestures.

You've been framed

The first thing that you notice about the output from the QuickCam is that it's not exactly up to CinemaScope levels of quality. You know when *The Chart Show* features the Indie top ten and most of the bands can't afford decent videos? That's what you get with the QuickCam. What's more, the frame rate is strongly reminiscent of playing *EF2000* on a 486SX. While this may not sound too good, the sheer novelty of seeing yourself talking, smiling, laughing and crying, all on your humble old PC, is hard to beat. What's more, when combined with a torch, you can use it as a kind of endoscope to see various parts of your body as you've never seen them before.

Recording clips is simply a matter of pressing a button, and if you could devise some way of lugging your PC round with you while pushing fat blokes into swimming pools, you could probably send the clips in to Jeremy Beadle. There's also a program provided for capturing stills, and for an extra £30 you can get networking software that enables you to link up with other users. Unfortunately, this only works over a network and not a modem, so you'll have to put all those pervy videophone fantasies on hold for the time being.

While it's hard to think how the average punter would get any use out of the QuickCam, it's great fun and, combined with other packages that can import .AVI files (the Video for Windows format), such as TrueSpace, it has lots of potential for creating all sorts of weird animations. **Z**

Score

80

An easy-to-use gadget that brings the wonder of home video to your PC.

Price: £69 excl VAT **Release Date:** Out now
Manufacturer: Connectix
Tel: 0800 966199

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Olivetti Envision P75

A PC that looks like a VCR that you can play *Doom* on? It must be the work of Satan! We sent Father Donald Robertson to exorcise this unholy sounding creation.

ONE THING ABOUT PCS IS THAT they are generally impossible to disguise in the home environment – but now there's a new breed that requires a second look to identify exactly what they are. The new Envision from Italian giant Olivetti falls into this category – it's a PC that looks totally different, comes without a monitor and is designed to sit inconspicuously underneath your telly.

The Envision is equipped for Video CD, which of course means MPEG; MPEG stands for Motion Picture Expert Group, the group responsible for everyone's fave video-on-a-PC system. The latest MPC (Multimedia PC) standard, MPC3, has recognised the importance of video and included MPEG.

Looks familiar?

Quite a few machines approach this spec, as well as the Envision. Finished in black (of course), the interesting point about the Envision is that rather than looking like a conventional PC, it looks more like a two-year-old video cassette recorder, complete with forward/reverse buttons, digital time read-out and remote infra-red controller. The keyboard has no lead but communicates by infra-red to an eye in the facia, and there's a trackball in place of the normal mouse. We had a few problems with it, so we used the PS/2 mini-Din sockets below the facia to plug in a conventional keyboard and mouse. This was just as well, as using the original feels like typing on a plank.

The machine comes supplied without a monitor, as many prospective purchasers are expected to use the TV in their living room. There are two SCART sockets at the rear, as well as a standard PC monitor socket and a selection switch. Other connection points include mini-jack audio in and out at the front and rear, phono plug audio out, one each serial, parallel and joystick ports, and MIDI in/out. The Envision is nothing if not well-connected.

Switching the unit on is unusual. After 30 seconds or so of activity, the screen blanks until you press the standby switch on the facia or infra-red remote. This then brings up the installation screen for Windows 95 (the one you see in the adverts that says 'Start' with Stones music on a washing powder background). Once you've entered the serial number from the Oli-badged Windows 95 disc along with your name, the machine whirrs and reboots for a bit before you finally get to Olipilot; Olipilot is a proprietary interface which presents Windows 95 and programs as equipment in the rooms of a house, and as usual with proprietary interfaces, simply slows things down. Fortunately it has a nice big Exit door.

Testing, testing 1-2-3

Once we got the Envision to our Penthouse Lab, we tested the MPEG with several Video CDs. Our favourite title happens to be *Female Vampire*, a frotterie of lasting cinematic value, albeit a bit rough in places. The Envision's MPEG software, Olipilot's Video CD Player, has no time bar, which makes it impossible to select the particular 78 frames you want to, er, inspect repeatedly; because of this we used Windows Media Player. The playback quality was watchable, but not excellent – what's more, not all the MPEG discs we used for our review seemed suitable for the Envision – it recognised *Four Weddings And A Funeral* but that was about as far as it went.

As a plain old computer, performance of the little disk-scraper was pretty poor for a 75P machine. Using the *Doom 2* timedemo demo1 test, Pentium



90s typically give 40-45 fps, my own DX2/66 gives 21, and you can expect a frame rate of 30 from a DX4/100. However, the Envision produced a frame rate of 27. The DX2/66 and DX4/100 both have crackin' graphics cards, but they still cost less than £1600, or the price of the Envision. For the asking price (excluding a monitor), you could get a far better standard MPEG-capable PC which would give you improved performance of up to 30 per cent. It would also have more room for expansion cards and drives, and its motherboard would probably upgrade to at least a 100P, if not a 133P processor.

And yet, and yet. The Envision is still a PC, no matter how camouflaged, and works well enough, though you'll need a monitor for word processing. PCs are not generally things of beauty, and the subdued cosmetics of the Envision might, (just) make it acceptable to the furnishings tyrant. However, if you've always believed that beauty is only skin deep, you're probably right. **Z**

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He's seen it, done it, and fireballed it to ashes before others have even got past the first level. And yet, and yet, he's still a miserable little git. Victor Meldrew step aside, The Boggit is here.



TROUBLESHOOTER

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Because our tips line is so busy, and because the man who answers the phone is only a mere mortal we need you to prove that you have actually bought the magazine and that you're not just a freeloading blagger. To do this, our tips geezer will ask you for a password before you request your tip. This month's password is... *"Spooge-tastic"*.

The Boggit's Mailbag

I SUPPOSE THAT PLAYING *Command & Conquer* until 3am comes under the heading of self-inflicted injury. Yes, yes, I know it's sad, but at least most gameplayers are fully aware that they are hovering close to the line between enthusiastic hobbyist, and potential 'Care in the Community' candidates. To prove that I really can see the funny side, I'll repeat a quote I came across earlier this month: "Computer hobbyists are generally overweight males of somewhat questionable hygiene, who play games in their underpants." Oh dear, oh dear, I feel as if someone has been looking through my keyhole.

Alone In The Dark II

I've got into the room with the piano in it, but I can't figure out how to open the door at the end of the room. I used a token in the piano, but it doesn't seem to do much. Also, is the altar (or whatever it is upstairs) anything to do with it? Please help me even though I am totally crap at the game and will probably just get stuck again.

Daragh Lowe, Limerick

There was a young man called Lowe
Who didn't know where to go.
He knew what to do,
To get out of the stew,
But the tokens he needed were two.

Boo, hiss, gerroft! I'll have you know that took me five minutes to make up. Return to where you used the nickel in the slot machine and you should find that there are two tokens. Both tokens need to be inserted in the music machine to open the door. Incidentally, it's an organ, not a piano. And if you can confuse your organ with a piano then I can only suggest that you contact The Guinness Book of Records.

Ultima Underworld II

We've found all the blackrock gems and have cut the Guardian's lines of power in all the worlds. We've got the Horn of Praecor Loth, and the Air Daemon is installed in the Avatar's body, but we can't use it to blow the damned horn.

Can you please tell us if we've missed something? It's so horribly frustrating to seem to be so close to the end of the game and yet unable to go on.

Ann & Ken Clarke, Faringdon

Do you realise how silly all that sounds? Whenever I read of 'The Mighty Sword of Arkon ' and the 'Magical Helm of Firkin' I start to look round just in case anyone is watching me, and is thinking that I am some kind of plonker. In order to answer your letter I booted up Ultima Underworld *again and was shocked to see how poor it looks now. In a few short years we seem to have moved light years forwards from that which once looked so great. Still, no complaints here – such leaps forward can only be good news for gamers.*

Anyway... to answer your question. Once you have the horn and have stolen Mors Gatha's spell book you must return to the castle and discuss final plans with Nystul in his quarters. Mors Gotha will arrive and you must slay her. Return now to the Throne Room to assist in the ceremony. Nystul will read backwards from the spell book and then you will blow the horn.

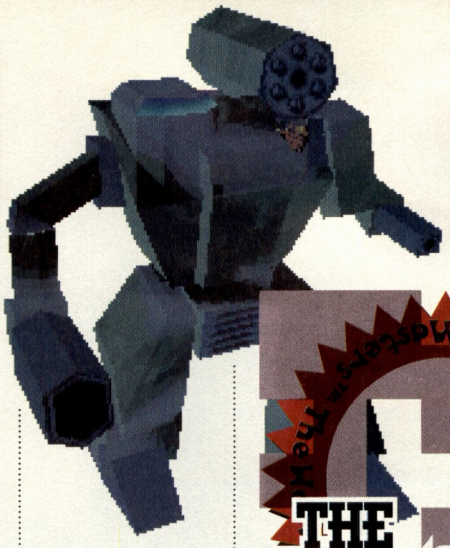
And very silly you will look too!

Write to PC Zone

If you have a query concerning a role-playing game or adventure, or you have a hot tip or a cheat to share, then write to:

The Boggit
The Old Blackthorn Tree
29 Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield, Aylesford
KENT ME20 6NR





What underhand practices have the dodgy gameplayers among us been up to this month? If you're the type of sad individual who solves jigsaws with a pair of scissors, it looks like you've come to the right place...

Simon The Sorcerer II

Please could you tell me how I can get past the monster in Sordid's Fortress without it hearing me?

J Stanners, Edinburgh

This solution is so disgusting it just might make you vomit. Go to the generator room and get some goblin sweat onto the tapestry. Squeeze the sweat into the chemical sprayer, then push the lever to switch off all the lights. Return to the room with the monster and spray yourself with the ghastly goblin smell. You can muffle the sound of your feet by wearing a 'hush puppy' on them which magically changes into slippers. Funny, eh?

Ravenloft

After the Wereraven gives you the key to the old church and the scrying glass, I can't seem to find the door to use the key on. I've searched every wall.

Dave, Manchester

I've consulted the oracle who tells me that the door in question is not necessarily your immediate problem. Firstly you must get a chest from the ground to obtain the first of four Catacomb Keys. You need all four keys to get all 15 (yes, 15!) coins from the catacombs to give to the gypsy in exchange for a potion. Once you have the coins, leave using the ladder in the north-eastern corner of the Catacombs. Make sure you press all of the buttons, as some open up hidden doorways.

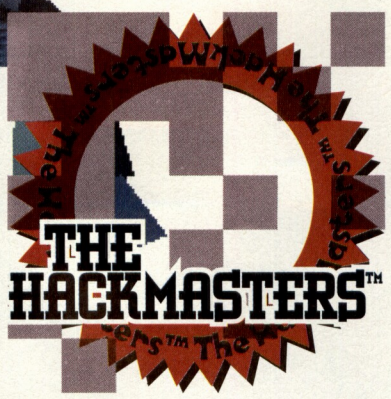
Go back to the Blood on the Vine Inn, and purchase the potion. With the potion you can walk through the poison mist. Your next trick is to get four seeds and plant them within four small circles in the forest.

Lands Of Lore

I am on Level 3 of the White Tower and keep getting my arse kicked by some spooks and what looks like a bloody big snake. I have tried every permutation I can think of but to no avail. And I don't think my PC appreciated the resulting constant cajoling with my size 11 boot.

Colin Kennedy, Scotland

This is probably the best RPG available for the PC. I recall the ghosts were a big problem, and that I only got past them by using the Vaelan's Cube which knocked spots off them. You probably don't have the cube now as you used it on the barrier, but my version had a bug which allowed me to create as many cubes as I wished. And a lot of good that is to you. You certainly can't run about hacking, as that has no effect – we are talking offensive magic here or you're lost. Ensure that you are not attempting the Tower too early. Before embarking on the Tower you must have completed Yvel City and have the capability of casting Sparks, Healing, Freezing, Fireball and Lightning spells.



MechWarrior 2

MechWarrior 2 has what must surely be the most impressive intro sequence for any PC game I've ever seen; however, the game itself is a bit more difficult to love. But it is possible to gain the edge in the battle with the following cheats – but you must hold down the <SHIFT>, <CTRL> and <ALT> keys together while typing the cheat command.

BLORB	Invulnerability
CIA	Unlimited ammo
MIGHTY MOUSE	Unlimited jump jets
COLDMISER	Heat tracking off
TLOFRONT	Rear view hud camera becomes a front camera
XRAY	X-ray vision
ZMAK	Time expansion enabled
TINKERBELL	Free-floating external cameras
DORCS	Meet the programmers!!!

(submitted by Steve Sells)

Slipstream 5000

At the main menu, type <REFINERY> for access to every available track. This cheat also fills your pockets with money.

TFX

Some desk pilots think that the PC was invented just to play flight sims; *TFX* from Ocean looks pretty good and has lots of wonderful little keystrokes to keep wannabe pilots happy. At any time during play, just type <PLOP> for an interesting effect.

Theme Park

You simply haven't lived until you've drunk a litre of coke, eaten at least two revolting hamburgers and a pizza, and thrown up over the operator of the Rocky Mountain Ride. An easy way to make money out of sick punters is to type <HORZA> when saving your game. When it asks for your nickname, type <HORZA> again. You'll now find that during the game, typing <CTRL-C> will flood your coffers with gold.

The Patrician

The aim of *The Patrician* is to work, scheme and hustle your way to a fortune through trading in dodgy goods. However, you should never forget the real-life patrician's golden rule: "Never give a punter an even break." Edit your SAVEGAME and change the contents of byte 0213 to FF FF FF.

Ultima

Ultima VIII

In the *Ultima* role-playing games you take on the role of the Avatar, an all-round nice guy who loves his mum and carries a bent sword for prising boy scouts out of horse's hooves. I hate him! Isn't it nice that there's a cheat...

```
CD\GAMES\ULTIMA8\GAMEDAT
DEBUG AVATAR.DAT
E 12A 01 01
W
Q
```

This will switch on the cheat mode next time you play. A 'click' on the Avatar brings up a basic cheat menu, and you can also use the function keys to give yourself an unfair advantage.

Lord British

And on to ways of dealing with Lord British. There's quite a list of interesting facts concerning the killing of this person, and as no true Avatar would contemplate murdering this kindly and noble king, here's the way to do it...

Ultima VI

Get a glass sword and sneak up on him when he's sleeping. Hit him with the sword, and you'll be told that you've slain him. The funny thing is that he continues to stand around.

Ultima VII

Around 23.59 (midnight), read the plaque above him for another way of killing him.

Ultima VII

Use the Black Sword's KILL power to slay him when he's nearby.

Zool 2

The ninja from the sweetshop can bite the top of my cream egg anytime *(Er, where exactly is this leading? – Censorship Ed.)*, but even he can do with a little sugar rush now and then.

Level skip, plus extra height jumps: at the options screen press <ESC> to get to the config. menu. Type <PHONEBOOK> and press <ESC> again.

During play you will now find that pressing <0> will take you to the next level, and pressing <3> will give you a bonus stage. Pressing <CTRL> will also enable you to jump higher. »



THE TRUEPLAYERS™

In the first of a two-part player's guide, we take up the gun on the side of the angels, and enter the Land of Nod on a Search and Destroy mission.

Command & Conquer

The GDI Missions

SPOILED

There are 15 missions to be completed on the GDI tour, out of a grand total of 25 possible combinations. Although your missions may not be exactly the same as those selected here, you should find that they are the most common ones.

'Real Men Never Read The Manual'

It's important to read the 'Read Me' file on the CD before you start. Note the special keys, as a few of them really are essential; for example, vehicles such as APCs and tanks can destroy dangerous ground troops by driving over them, but the only way to force them to do this is by using the special keys.

Level 2

The purpose of this level is to teach you the importance of engineers. Select an engineer, then point at an enemy building to get the three arrowhead icon: this means that you want the engineer to enter and take control of the structure. Once your engineer is safely inside the building, any of its resources and capabilities become yours. The different weaponry which only the Noddies are capable of producing can now be created for your purposes, and turned against the bad guys. Even more importantly, you can sell the building for loadsa money, which you may badly need.

In the beginning keep the engineers in a safe place until the Humm-Vee reinforcement arrives, then strike North to take the enemy camp. Move your engineer into the refinery to gain his cash balance, then destroy everything.

Level 3

Locate the enemy SAM sites and destroy them all

You will now be able to use the weapon of an air strike. Note that air strikes are particularly effective when targeted against massed groups of ground troops.

Level 4

Retrieve the crate of rods

The trick to this level is to realise that you don't have to destroy the enemy to win, so don't bother to fight, just run around them. An APC loaded with troops can make a rush for the top-left hand corner of the map, jump out next to the box and touch it to accomplish your mission. Other re-enforcements turn up periodically but you can win without their help.

Level 5 – Germany

Repair your base then destroy all Nod forces

Head for the bottom-right hand corner to regain your base. Once your harvester gets going you can rebuild your base and prepare to attack the enemy camp









in the top-right of the map. Knock out the enemy harvester to cut off his supply of cash and stop production of enemy weapons, then simply wear the bastard down by constantly attacking him with lots of Humm-Vees.

Level 6 - Czechoslovakia

Infiltrate the enemy base and destroy any of the buildings

This particular level is brilliant fun as it introduces the commando. The aim is to use the commando to destroy any single building within the enemy camp. There's no need to demolish all of the SAM sites, simply rush up the left hand side of the screen while you use the helicopter to lead the ground troops away from you. From the top left move into the centre to find an entrance.

Handy hint: While you can't land your helicopter in a darkened part of the map, you can land just inside the edges of the unknown area. As it lands a large area of map will be uncovered. By leapfrogging your helicopter forward you'll quickly uncover big lumps of the enemy territory.

Level 7 - Czechoslovakia (again)

Destroy all Nod forces

Start off by creating your camp in the bottom-left corner. Quickly set up a refinery and get the cash flowing. Build four machine gun posts as soon as you possibly can in order to stave off the early attacks. Once established, attack up the left-hand side, then move across at the top to find the west side of the enemy camp.

This mission will teach you that heavy weapons are not necessarily the answer to all your problems. The enemy has seemingly endless ground troops, and you'll find that they are more than a match for tanks. Should you attack their stronghold with battalions of heavy metal you'll get creamed like a Gulliver dragged down by the miniscule Lilliputians, (which is extremely bloody painful!). A few tanks are required to silence the large gun on the north-west corner of the Nod camp, and then to blast a hole in the barrier wall.

Now by using lots of small squads made up of three or four mixtures of ground forces, you can hold the enemy inside this entrance while a troop carrier loaded with an engineer can nip inside and grab control of the refinery. With possession of the refinery you will gain all of the enemies' gold, allowing you to create even more troops for the final assault. Don't commit everything in a mad attack – it's better to draw them out into your prepared position. A lumbering harvester makes a good battle wagon for steering into a crowd of waiting troops and cutting down their number in a dramatic way.

Level 8 - Austria

Repair your base and then wipe out all Nod Forces

This mission is a walkover. Begin by repairing your power stations and the refinery, then send out the harvester. Quickly move all forces out to control the bottom-left corner and the area immediately north of the camp to repel the first attack. As you can't build new vehicles, return them one at a time for full repair. From here on in return vehicles for repair as soon as you can after each skirmish, for once they are destroyed they are gone forever. Use troops to carry out close attacks as they can be replaced and you can easily make more money harvesting. Follow the route over the bridge and then the route to the north. Eventually you will find yourself on a ridge above the eastern side of the enemy camp.

From here you can pound the troops and buildings below with little or no risk to yourself, as the Noddies stand around below you waiting to be shot like fish in a barrel. A final rush of troops and engineers in armoured carriers can make the journey up the west side of the map, past the two large turret guns, and seize the buildings which are left standing.

Level 9 - Hungary

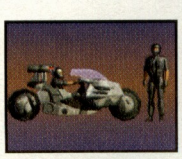
Destroy two gun turrets to the south of the river

Don't let yourself be fooled by this mission – you can't cross the river. The small group of men that are landed on the south bank cannot be replaced or re-enforced, so to begin with you must leave them alone.

The trick here to succeed is to destroy all of the SAM sites on the north side of the river, so that an air strike can be called up to weaken the southern guns – then your small platoon can finish the job in a final assault. »







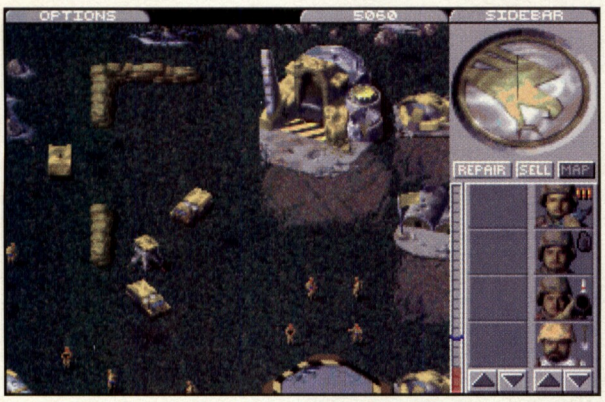


SPOILED

« Level 10 - Slovenia

Using Orca helicopters, Scout and Destroy

Build at least three airfields, placing them together so they can be easily refuelled and controlled. One attack wave from these will take out a gun turret. This level introduces you to sandbags, the Noddy's Achilles heel.



Your high-powered, super-techno foe appears to be completely dumbfounded by bags of sand, and when he meets a line of them blocking his path he will stand alongside them until you kindly turn up and blow him away. Use a fast scout car to run through the gorges and show you the position of the guns, then use the Orcas to take them out.

Level 11 - Greece

Find the spy Delphi and get him home

On hitting the beach, quickly move right and deploy your men to destroy the tank. Move up the map and then right to park your construction sight on the edge of the Tiberium field. Build 'lots' of gun turrets as fast as you can, because the bad guys are on their way.

It's worth keeping a 'ready built' turret to place in the middle of attacking troops once they turn up. Arm your camp to the teeth with turrets and Orcas as you'll be receiving many irate visitors.

The spy is standing in the top-right corner and once you have 'clicked' on him a rescue chopper will turn up as soon as the SAM sites are neutralised.

Level 12 - Albania

Get Doctor Mobius to safety

You can't replace any lost vehicles, so don't be in a hurry to leave camp – let the enemy come to you and destroy from prepared positions. Doctor Mobius is in your camp, so all you need do is destroy the SAM sites to bring in the rescue helicopter. If you get short of cash remember that you can sell redundant buildings. There's also a treasure chest to be found in the village to the north east.

Level 13 - Yugoslavia

Destroy Noddy's lab

You now have the super Ion cannon which deals powerful blasts to distant locations. You can either play this level







(Left) *Command & Conquer* – explosive!

for hours slowly inching your way across the map destroying a heavily dug-in enemy force, or you can win in a matter of minutes by remembering the purpose of the exercise. If you send a fast scout car up the right hand side of the map to the top corner and then move towards the middle you will find a wall. Behind the wall – completely undefended – is the enemy lab. A couple of Orcas, aided by a blast from the Ion cannon, and it's Mission Accomplished.

Level 14 – Yugoslavia again

Fish in the barrel

Keeping your ground troops spaced out to avoid being crushed by stealth tanks which suddenly appear, this level is a simple 'walk in the park'. Stealth tanks are scary because they are invisible, but they are also made out of tissue paper and tend to stand in the same spot. Send a scout car around to find them, take note of their location, then return with the heavy mob. You can surround the spot where the stealth tank was seen, then attack.

Level 15 – The Big One!

This is the level where you can sandbag the bastard to death. On arrival, move across the bridge and turn right into a gorge beneath a gun turret (you should see an enclosed Tiberium field to your left). Fast as you can, set up a sandbag line across the mouth of the gorge, then extend it to the left and right. You'll need a few bazookas to protect yourself and take out the early visitors. The enemy's only access to the whole of the bottom half of the map is through a single entrance to your north-east. Sandbag a single line towards this entrance and seal him in.

Get two engineers ready to take over the enemy structures which will suddenly appear in the field to your left, and lay a single sandbag over the spot between them, where a deadly Obelisk will sprout. You are now free to build an advanced guard tower and take out the gun turrets. With the bottom half of the map and all of the Tiberium, you now can build a force of at least six Orcas ready to start knocking out the opposition. Once the Ion cannon is on-line, you can zap your way into the entrance of the sandbagged enemy camp and use engineers to take over the Hand of Nod and Airport.

"Warning, warning!" The Noddy forces now have access to atomic weapons and during play you will be hit at least once. This one blast can destroy your entire camp, so it's a wise move to invest in a mobile construction site which will enable you to set up a second camp from where you can rebuild if things get wiped out.

Next month we'll take up the sword on the side of darkness and kick those GDI mothers to hell and back! Z

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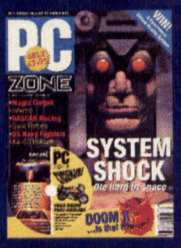
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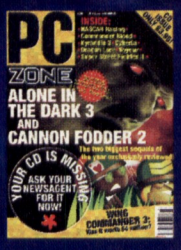
November 94
- HD version (AW20A) *Master of Magic*
- CD version (AW20A/CD) *The UltraSound Experience;* demo's from *Cyclemania, Battle Bugs* and more.



December 94
- HD version (AW21A) *System Shock Doom II Level Editor*
- CD version (AW21A/CD) *Doom* levels plus some for *Doom II*; demo of *DeltaV, Transport Tycoon* plus loads more.



January 95
- HD version (AW22A) *Discworld*
- CD version (AW22A/CD) *Cyberwar, Creature Shock, Magic Carpet* demo and more.



February 95
- HD version (AW23A) *Cannon Fodder 2*
- CD version (AW23A/CD) *U.S. Navy Fighters, Discworld, King's Quest 7. Noctoropolis* and more



March 95
- HD version (AW24A) *Kick Off 3, European Challenge*
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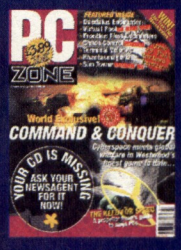
April 95
- HD version (AW25A) *XCOM–Terror from the Deep*
- CD version (AW25A/CD) The final *Doom* showdown, demos such as *Jungle Strike, Inferno, MetalTech.*



May 95
- HD version (AW26A) *Pyrotechnica*
- CD version (AW26A/CD) demo of *BioForge, Lost Eden, Rise of the Triad, Orion Conspiracy, Full Throttle*



June 95
- HD version (AW27A) *Baldies* and *Virtual Pool*
- CD version (AW27A/CD) *StarTrek: The Next Generation* interactive demo, plus demos of *Slipstream 5000, Warriors* and loads more.



July 95
- HD version (AW28A) *Jagged Alliance*
- CD version (AW28A/CD) playable demos of *Alien Breed: Tower Assault, Braindead 13* and *Kingdom: The Far Reaches* plus a round up of action demos

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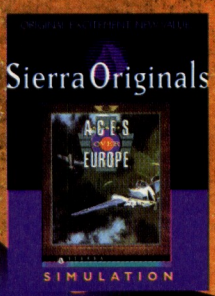
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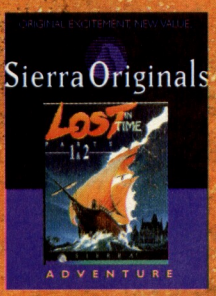
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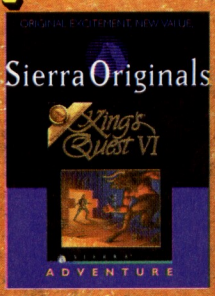
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BUYERS' GUIDE

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing *PC Zone* Buyers Guide, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

Issue 7 – October 1993

Ambush At Sorinor
(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Short, sharp missions (and plenty of 'em) go to make this an interesting strategy game.

Archer Maclean's Pool (256 colour version)
(88: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £30.99
Exactly what it claims to be – the same game with more colours. Our score assumes you don't have the original.

Caesar Deluxe
(70) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
More user-friendly than its predecessor but the game remains the same.

Clash Of Steel
(67) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Intricate and well presented wargame with plenty of appeal for the dedicated wargamer.

Day Of The Tentacle (CD)
(87: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £45.99
A very taxing, very American adventure, with some of the best animation ever.

Dune (CD)
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
A shining example of a good game made into a great game for CD.

Eric The Unready (CD)
(77) Accolade – Adventure £34.99
Hilarious, but the creaky interface isn't so funny.

F-15 Strike Eagle II
(85: Recommended) Kixx – Flight Sim £16.99
It still holds its own in a dogfight.

Flames Of Freedom
(70) Kixx – Strategy/Arcade £9.99
A bit old, a bit saggy, but will still give purists much fun.

Galactic Warrior Rats
(75) Alternative Software – Arcade £9.99
Totally simple, totally basic, but quite good fun nevertheless.

Gunboat
(54) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
Unfortunately a good idea that doesn't translate into a good game.

Hardball
(20) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Interesting only as an example of how bad baseball games used to be.

Imperial Pursuit
(80: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Sim £19.99
Long, involving 'story-driven' tour of duty, perfect for Skywalker wannabes.

King's Quest VI (CD)
(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £49.99
Excellent use of a CD, despite the 'soft' story.

Lands Of Lore
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Role-Playing Game £35.99
A tasty and involving reminder of what *Eye Of The Beholder III* could have been.

Legend Of Kyrandia (CD)
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Stunning to look at, but not really challenging enough if you're the type who has played a lot of adventures before.

LHX Attack Chopper
(88: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Simulation £14.99
Still one of the classic flight sims.

Loom
(72) Kixx – Adventure £14.99
Simple and enchanting adventure; an ideal game for beginners.

Mean 18"
(60) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Reasonable mid-table golf game.

MIG-29
(75) MicroProse – Flight Sim £19.99
An excellent add-on for *Falcon 3.0* fans, but nothing groundbreaking in flight sim terms.

NHL Hockey
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
A great version of a brilliant game.

Pirates Gold!
(75) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
As good as the original. Unfortunately, it almost is the original.

Railroad Tycoon Deluxe
(72) MicroProse – Strategy £39.99
Not significantly better than the original, but if you haven't got that then add 20% to the score.

Ringworld (CD)
(82: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
An alternative to having it on disk; nothing more!

Rules Of Engagement 2
(91: Classic) Impressions – Strategy £44.99
A game of great depth and complexity.

Seal Team
(77) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up/Strategy £44.99
In storyboard form this probably looked fabulous. In transition to code, however, it feels like something has gone astray.

Simon The Sorcerer
(86: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £39.99
At last an Anglo answer to the average American adventure. Recommended.

The Lost Vikings
(80: Recommended) Interplay – Arcade £34.99
An excellent puzzle/platform/arcade game (you'll have to categorise it yourself, we can't be bothered).

The Patrician
(65) Daze Marketing – Trading Sim £34.99
Desperate for a trading game set in the Hanseatic League but which could have been given more zap? Look no further.

Wing Commander Academy
(60) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99
This is only really worthwhile for *Wing Commander* combat addicts.

Issue 8 – November 1993

Battle Chess
(45) Interplay – Chess £44.99
Stalemate for the *Battle Chess* series.

Blue Force (CD)
(40) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
As you can see by our score, we reckon this is a criminal waste of a CD.

Conquered Kingdoms
(71) Mirage – Wargame £44.99
The rather second-rate packaging and laughable manual conceals a highly playable, fantasy wargame.

Cover Girl Strip Poker
(40) On-Line Entertainment – Card Game £34.99
As if it's not bad enough that this is an appallingly bad poker game, it's also a weak excuse for some dirty pics.

Flight Simulator 5.0
(90: Classic) Microsoft – Flight Simulation £35.00
The definitive flying simulation, but not the definitive flying 'game'.

Gear Works
(62) The Software Business – Puzzle Game £19.99
Not good enough for the price and not cheap enough for what it is.

Grand Prix Circuit
(50) Hit Squad – Driving Game £12.99
Playable but crap for the price.

Hard Drivin' 2
(30) Hit Squad – Driving Game £12.99
Unplayable and crap for the price.

Homeworld: Gateway II
(75) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Long, hard trek through pretty unatmospheric space.

Lord Of The Rings
(70) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99
New and improved role-playing Tolkien jaunt for patient fantasy fans only.

Lost In Time
(69) Coktel Vision – Adventure £44.99
Tough, good looking adventure that comes a cropper at the end.

Motor Stars
(75) Revell – Racing £59.99
Sex on CD for kit-heads but coffee mat for everyone else.

Patriot
(45) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £44.95
A revolutionary but seriously flawed approach to land-based wargaming.

Shadowlands
(65) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £12.99
One for the RPG addicts.

Solitaire's Journey
(87) Mirage – Puzzle £44.99
The closest that solitaire fans will get to Heaven on Earth.

Stronghold
(80: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Extremely addictive even if you'd normally steer clear of D&D™.

Super Space Invaders
(75) Hit Squad – Arcade £9.99
Here's a blast from the past for less than a round of drinks.

T2
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade £29.99
Mindless, chaotic and highly addictive.

The Silver Seed (Ultima VII Add-On Disk)
(50) Origin – Role-Playing Game £19.99
An utterly pointless addition to a brilliant game. One can only turn to Origin and ask, 'Why?'

Troddlers
(79) SCI – Puzzle Game £29.99
Not at all bad, but it smacks too much of other games to achieve classic status.

Issue 9 – December 1993

Blue Angels
(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99
Interesting, but hardly spectacular.

Brutal Football
(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99
Too much violence, not enough game.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat
(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.

Clix
(62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle Game £14.99
Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.

Cogito
(57) Mindscape – Puzzle Game £29.99
A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands
(83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99
The next best thing to *Ultima*.

Dino Dini's Goal
(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99,
Kick Off with sideways options (but it works). Not as good as *Sensible Soccer*.

Dracula
(65) Psygnosis – Arcade £39.99
A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.

Frontier: Elite II
(95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99
Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.

Front Page Sports Football Pro
(85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99
The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.

Gobliiins
(50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle £39.99
An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.

Hook
(35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99
At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.

Jack The Ripper
(39) Mirage – Adventure £44.99
Ugly, unpleasant and boring. We know, give it a job with *PC Zone*.

Jutland
(72) On-Line Entertainment – Strategy £59.99
Good but sadly there are too many unnecessary gimmicks.

Kasparov's Gambit
(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99
Excellent chess game with attitude and personality.

Magic Candle II
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
Good as an RPG, excellent as a budget.

NFL Coaches Club Football
(70) MicroProse – Sport £44.99
Certainly a good attempt but it's a shame that it's badly let down by the rather poor passing system.

Privateer
(75) Origin – Flight Sim £49.99
Wing Commander fans will love this. *X-Wing* fans won't. It's as simple as that.

Sim Farm
(79) Maxis – Strategy £34.99
Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as *Sim City*.

Steel Thunder
(60) Hit Squad – Arcade £12.99
It's reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.

Street Fighter II
(81: Recommended) US Gold – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Addictive and violent but the cross over to the PC IS hindered unless you have a gamepad.

Strike Commander: Tactical Operations
(80: Recommended) Origin – Flight Simulator £19.99
Essential if you're determined to get the most out of *Strike Commander*.

V for Victory 4: Gold–Juno–Sword
(78) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99
It's still the best computer wargame system but it needs a shot in the arm... or leg... or both even.

When Two Worlds War
(63) Impressions – Wargame £34.99
An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new – including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

Issue 10 – January 1994

8 Ball Deluxe
(75) Supervision – Pinball Game £34.99
Technically, the best pinball game there is, but there's not enough of it for the price.

20th Century Almanac
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £74.99
Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.

Aces Over Europe
(78) Dynamix – Flight Sim £44.99
It's better than *Aces Of The Pacific*, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.

Air Combat Classics
(60) US Gold – Flight Sim £45.99
Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.

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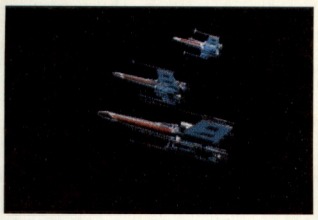
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(Left) *X-Wing:* groove on down to the old 'destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess' tune.

Alien Breed
(75) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.
Dracula Unleashed
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £39.99
Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.
Dreamlands
(72) Daze Marketing – Compendium £29.99
The ideas and graphics are interesting; the gameplay, however, isn't.
Goblins 2
(67) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £44.99
Zany puzzle game, frustrating at times but mostly good fun.
IndyCar Racing
(93: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £44.99
The new definitive driving game. And it comes with a free moustache.
Innocent Until Caught
(84: Recommended) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
Well worth nicking. Ho ho.
Jurassic Park
(73) Ocean – Adventure £34.99
Despite some irritating flaws, this is an atmospheric and addictive game.
Knights Of The Sky
(79) Kixx – Strategy £16.99
A game that's well worth buying for the two-player option alone.
Links Championship Course: Innisbrook
(75) US Gold – Sport £24.99
If you really want another *Links* course, then this is one.
Links
(80: Recommended) Kixx – Sport £16.99,
An excellent golf game for anyone with a less than ninja PC.
Lords Of Power
(85: Recommended) Ubisoft – Strategy £39.99
A first class simulation which you would be mad not to buy.
Network Q RAC Rally 2
(80: Recommended) Europress Software – Driving Game £34.99
A rather good addition to the current crop of driving games, if you can stand the opponent's amazing skills.
Newsweek Interactive
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £39.99
Over-priced, over-patronising and over here.
Night Shift
(70) Kixx – Puzzle Game £12.99
A suitably frantic and frustrating puzzler.
Oceans Below
(70) The Software Business – Edutainment £39.99
Initially interesting, but unfortunately the novelty all too soon wears off. Strictly for scuba diving fans.
Protostar (CD)
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Space Sim £39.99
Absorbing, well designed and, if you can forgive its weaker moments, it'll keep you busy for ages.
Return To Zork (CD)
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £49.99
Bad news for text-adventure purists who thought that *Zork* was sacred. Ha!
Return To Zork
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £45.99
A highly imaginative and enjoyable adventure game with some very clever knobs attached.
Shadowcaster
(66) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Neither *Wolfenstein* nor *Underworld*. And not much in-between.
Speed Racer
(49) Accolade – Racing £39.99
Nice intro, shame about the game.
Star Trek: Judgement Rites
(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
The stories are poetic and the variety of gameplay is 'fascinating' but it isn't the best flight sim or adventure game.
Strike Squad
(25) Empire – Strategy £39.99
One look at the poor score should be enough to tell you what we think of the game. Just turn the page and get on with enjoying life, okay?

The Blue And The Gray
(78) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
Dedicated blood 'n' guts fans will find it a little simplistic, but it's a great all-round wargame with hidden depths and longterm playability.
The Even More Incredible Machine
(89: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
If you've never played *The Incredible Machine* now's the time to start. So come on then, what are you waiting for?!
World Class Rugby
(60) Audiogenic – Sport £14.99
Not really worth the waggle.
World War Two: Battles Of The South Pacific
(62) Mirage – Strategy/Action £44.99
An innovative mix of naval strategy and action, though unfortunately the gameplay doesn't quite live up to expectations.

Issue 11 – February 1994

Advantage Tennis
(55) Infogrames – Sport £35.99
Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.
Alone In The Dark 2
(97: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
Absolutely brilliant! What the PC was made for.
Alone in the Dark (CD)
(92: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
Still the best thing since sliced bread. Buy it.
B-Wing
(72) US Gold – Space Sim £19.99
Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy *B-Wing* or, er, something else.
Capitol Hill (CD)
(75) Software Toolworks – Edutainment £39.99
Comprehensive introduction to American politics.
Chessmaster 4000 Turbo
(90: Classic) Mindscape – Chess £34.99
Tough opponent: gentle teacher.
Critical Path (CD)
(72) Media Vision – Adventure £49.99
Slick and atmospheric but way too short.
Dungeon Hack
(62) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. For very hardened and grizzled role-players only.
Fire And Ice
(75) Renegade – Platform Game £29.99
A fun but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.
Flight Sim Toolkit
(80: Recommended) Domark – Simulation £49.99
Recommended, but only if you find *Stunt Island* limiting. It can be very heavy going.
Global Dominaton
(65) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.
Goblins 3
(75) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £39.99
Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.
Kingmaker
(88: Recommended) US Gold – Board Game £37.99
Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.
Magic Boy
(60) Empire – Platform Game £25.99
Not very 'magic' at all.
Master of Orion
(72) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
A good one for all the accountants out there.
Rebel Assault
(93: Classic) LucasArts – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
It's *Star Wars*. It's also the most important game to date.
Striker
(55) Elite – Sport £29.99
Another Paul Bodin penalty of the gamesplaying world.
Subwar 2050
(88: Recommended) MicroProse – Simulation £44.99
Easily the best 'fun' simulation that MicroProse has produced.

The Labyrinth Of Time
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Adventure £39.99
Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy. A quite superb adventure though.
The Terminator Rampage
(75) Bethesda Softworks – Arcade £39.99
Okay, but once you've seen *Doom*, you'll laugh in *Rampage*'s face and spill its pint.
VGA Planets
(70) PAW PBM – Role-Playing Game £24.99
A rather interesting type of RPG that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

Issue 12 – March 1994

Campaign
(52) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action – too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.
Championship Manager '94
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's still the best (just).
Championship Manager Italia
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.
Combat Classics 2
(50) Empire – Flight Sim Compendium £34.99
Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second-rate duds.
Companions Of Xanth
(73) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Awful puns. Questionable humour. Very *Monkey Island*-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?
Cyber Race
(64) Cyberdreams – Racing £44.99
Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.
Fury Of The Furries
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99
A riveting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.
Gabriel Knight
(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.
Genesia
(83: Recommended) Mindscape – Strategy £34.99
A little bit of *Populous*, a little bit of *Civilization*.
Hand Of Fate
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.
Heirs To The Throne
(43) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
If I got this kind of quality from a PD game I'd blinking well complain.
Indianapolis 500
(65) Hit Squad – Driving £14.99
A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.
Leisure Suit Larry 6
(75) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £35.99
The best *Larry* yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.
Litil Divil
(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics – Puzzle Game £39.99
An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.
Police Quest 4: Open Season
(78) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.
Premier Challenge
(78) T'ai Chi – Sport £24.99
Design your own game. Boost this score.
Premier Manager 2
(65) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £34.99
It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.
Shadow Of Darkness
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A compelling storyline, but the battle scenes are dull.
The Incredible Toons
(82: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
Zany, silly and highly addictive.

Issue 13 – April 1994

Archon Ultra
(78) US Gold – Strategy £39.99
More beat 'em up than strategy.
Beneath A Steel Sky
(83: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £39.99
Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.
Conspiracy
(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.
D-Day
(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99
D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.
Daemonsgate
(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.
Doom
(96: Classic) iD Software – Arcade £34.99
The best arcade game and also the best multi-player game ever. *Doom* is the best. Need we say more?
Hired Guns
(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Ishar 2 with robots.
Hot Sound And Vision
(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99
An outstanding collection.
Interplay's 10 Year Anthology
(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.
Micro Machines
(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC, that is).
Mortal Kombat
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Not as good as the SNES *Street Fighter II*, but the best on the PC.
Nomad
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.
Pinball Fantasies
(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £37.95
The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original *Pinball Dreams*.
Reunion
(80: Recommended) Grandslam – Strategy £TBA
Reunion has something for everyone.
Sim City 2000
(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99
Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.
Star Trek: 25th Anniversary
(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure Game £49.99
A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.
Strike Commander (CD)
(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.
The Complete UMS
(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Both classics in their day, the two *UMS* games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.
The Lawnmower Man
(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99
Excellently presented. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.
Winter Olympics
(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99
Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.
Wizard
(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs. »



(Left) *Simon The Sorcerer:* at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

Issue 14 – May 1994

Air Transport Pilot (CD)
(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95
Well, it's not really our idea of fun, but it's a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.

Airlines
(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99
Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.

Arena: The Elder Scrolls
(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99
Disappointing really.

Award Winner Gold Edition
(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99
Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!

Battle Isle 2
(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99
Without a shadow of a doubt, this is *the* strategy game of the year.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)
(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
A stunning improvement on an already classic game.

Cannon Fodder
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.

CD-ROM Challenge Pack
(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99
Reasonably good compilation, but there are better ones around.

Championship Manager For Windows
(79) Domark – Sport £29.99
A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.

D/Generation
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99
Probably the best game that *Windows* users have ever played.

Excellent Games
(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99
Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2, Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker, Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.

Fantastic Dizzy
(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
What can we say? Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.

Gabriel Knight (CD)
(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Brooding, atmospheric thriller.

In Extremis
(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99
You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!

Johnny Quest
(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99
Can basically be summed up in one word – dreadful.

Megarace
(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99
A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.

Merchant Prince
(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance, we reckon you'll be hooked.

Microcosm
(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.

NFL Pro League Football
(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99
As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.

Privateer: Righteous Fire
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99
Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.

Seawolf
(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.

Starlord
(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!

The Patrician (CD)
(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99
A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.

The Red Crystal
(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.

Unnecessary Roughness
(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99
Best described as 'all right'. It's as good as most American footy sims.

Issue 15 – June 1994

Bloodnet
(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.

Carriers At War II
(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
For die-hard strategy aficionados.

Darkseed
(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99
If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the *Darkseed* affair.

Diggers
(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99
Mind-numbingly tedious.

Disney Animation Studio
(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99
More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!

Dragonsphere
(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99
A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.

Evasive Action
(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99
So close, but more bugs than Watergate.

F1
(40) Domark – Sport £29.99
The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.

Fleet Defender
(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Simulation £44.99
Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.

Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop
(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99
Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.

Hornet Naval Strike Fighter
(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Sim
As that well known saying goes: 'If you like *Falcon 3*, you'll just love *Hornet*.'

Myst
(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.

Pacific Strike
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Miles better than *Strike Commander* but requires a state-of-the-art ninja PC.

Pagan: Ultima VII
(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Without doubt a love/hate relationship for *Ultima* purists.

Ravenloft
(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99
SSI has finally got 'real' and produced a playable and accessible RPG.

Red Hell
(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99
The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.

RedShift
(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00
Stunning program which will be hard to beat.

Sabre Team
(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99
This has all been done before, and done much better as well.

Shadowcaster
(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.

Spaceship Warlock
(70) Reactor/Ubisoft – Adventure £44.99
Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.

TFX
(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99
Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.

UFO Enemy Unknown
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.

Washington DC Scenery
(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99
One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

Issue 16 – July 1994

Castles II
(65) Interplay – Strategy £49.95
Interplay usually releases excellent games – this isn't one of them.

Comanche (CD)
(90: Classic) Optima – Flight Sim £49.99
Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.

Companions Of Xanth (CD)
(84: Recommended) Accolade – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Great game on disk. Even better on CD.

Corridor 7
(55) Gametek – Arcade £19.99
Nothing new or exciting.

Detroit
(85: Recommended) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.

Dragon's Lair
(67) Elite Systems – Adventure £39.99
An interactive cartoon that's more 'cartoon' than 'interactive'.

Eye Of The Storm
(40) Rebellion – Space/Strategy £39.99
Very futuristic, very *Elite* and very, very crap.

Great Naval Battles 2
(86: Recommended) US Gold – Simulation £45.99
SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.

Hand Of Fate (CD)
(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £49.99
Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.

Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition
(85: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
A good golf game at an amazing price.

Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Sport £14.99
Dangerously addictive snooker sim.

Lucky's Casino Adventure
(60) Mirage – Card Game £44.99
Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.

Lure Of The Temptress
(55) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Old and fading.

Power Game 2 (CD)
(70) Activision – Simulation £29.99
Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.

Robinson's Requiem
(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing – Role-Playing Game £39.99
This is a highly original and addictive 'survival sim' which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.

Sam And Max Hit The Road
(93: Classic) US Gold – Adventure £45.99
Brilliantly original and a highly humorous jaunt.

Sim City Classic
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £16.99
Still a great game but check out *Sim City 2000* first.

Sim City Enhanced
(82: Recommended) Interplay – Strategy £49.99
Sim City's an excellent game but 50 quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.

Sleepwalker
(45) Hit Squad – Platform Game £9.99
Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.

Space Hulk
(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.

Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
Good compilation, great value.

The Horde
(87: Recommended) US Gold – Strategy/Arcade £44.99
Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.

The Rock 'n' Roll Years – The '50s
(70) Supervision – General Interest £24.99
Handy for 50's music lovers or as a reference – but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.

The Settlers
(89: Recommended) Blue Byte – Strategy £39.99
A damn fine, engrossing game.

Theatre Of War
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £12.99
Excellent strategy game and it looks cool, too.

UFO
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Our Chris's favourite, this is an incredibly addictive strategy game.

Wembley Rugby League
(66) Audiogenic – Sport £29.99
This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.

Wolfpack
(60) Optima – Strategy £29.99
Disappointingly average.

World Cup Challenge
(48) Winsport – Sport £29.95
Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

Issue 17 – August 1994

1942: Pacific Air War
(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Two great games – *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* – in one package. It's a winner!

Al Quadim: The Genie's Curse
(40) US Gold/SSI – Role-Playing Game £35.99
The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.

Burntime
(43) Max Design – Strategy £39.99
Hey, it's just like being there.

Cool Spot
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Platform Game £29.99
Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!

Delta V
(64) Bethesda Softworks – Shoot 'Em Up £45.99
Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.

Dinosaur Detective Agency
(42) Alternative Software – Platform Game £16.99
Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.

Empire Soccer
(57) Empire – Sport £29.99
Let down by small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

Good To Firm
(50) New Era Software – Sport £29.99
Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.

International Tennis Open
(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media – Sport £44.99
Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

Jack Nicklaus (CD)
(78) Accolade – Sport £16.99
A perfectly seviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on. Wait for me while I put my golfing shoes on...

Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)
(0) Mindscape – General Interest £39.99
The most expensive beer mat in the world.

Overlord
(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Simulation £39.99
An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.

Pinball Dreams 2
(70) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £19.99
Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye
(88: Recommended) Activision – Puzzle Game £29.99

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NNON FODDER 2 ..... £9.99
ILISATION £18.99
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(Right) *IndyCar Racing:* great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

(Far right) *Sam & Max:* The clue's inside the cat. Rip its head off! (Sick, or what?)





Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.

Sherlock Holmes – The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel
(48) Electronic Arts – Adventure £49.99
Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

Simon The Sorcerer (CD)
(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £44.99
A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

Syndicate (CD)
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
What a game. What a barg.

Tactical Manager
(75) Black Legend – Sport £34.99
An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

Theme Park
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
A highly inventive 'business' sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog.

Walls Of Rome
(74) Digital Integration – Strategy £16.99
Good, if thin, fun.

World Cup USA '94
(78) US Gold – Sport £32.99
Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.

Zool 2
(82: Recommended) Millennium – Platform Game £34.99
As they say, if you liked *Zool*, you'll love this.

Issue 18 – September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)
(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
Comic book-style adventure with excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.

D-Day
(40) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a wargame without many redeeming features.

FIFA International Soccer
(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99
Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.

Harpoon II
(70) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always slooooow.

Inherit The Earth – Quest For The Orb
(72) US Gold – Adventure £39.99
A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a 'sensible' game.

International Sensible Soccer
(78) Renegade – Sport £19.99
One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.

Litil Divil (CD)
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Adventure £34.99
Excellent, original and addictive.

Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes
(35) Megatech – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.

On The Ball
(68) Ascon – Sport £34.99
Too many frills, not enough body.

Outpost
(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £49.99
A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.

Shadow Of The Comet (CD)
(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.

Soccer Kid
(30) Krisalis – Platform Game £29.99
If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.

Theatre Of Death
(35) Psygnosis – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Below average imitation of an above-average game.

TIE Fighter
(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Space Sim £49.99
Sheer, undiluted quality. Go out and treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 – October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!
(90: Classic) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Never mind the 50-ton tanks – this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

Battle Bugs
(65) Dynamix – Strategy £TBA
A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).

Dark Legions
(85: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.

Heimdall 2
(45) Core – Adventure £39.99
Great game, shame you can't play it.

Hell Cab
(50) Time Warner – Adventure £49.99
It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.

IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack
(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £17.99
These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).

Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity
(50) Simarils – Strategy £39.99
Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

KGB
(65) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.

Kick Off 3
(55) Anco – Sport £29.99
Nice features, but gameplay isn't up to much.

Manchester United Premier League Champions
(60) Krisalis – Sport £29.99
Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.

Planet Football
(68) Infogrames – Sport £39.99
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.

Police Quest IV – Open Season
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.

Summer Challenge
(73) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?

Under A Killing Moon (CD)
US Gold – Adventure £59.99
Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.

Wing Commander: Armada
(76) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
Lots of good ideas stuck together but somehow it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 – November 1994

Alien Legacy
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £39.99
Space strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.

Chaos Engine
(80: Recommended) Renegade – Arcade £32.99
A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.

Colonization
(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.

Cyclemania (CD)
(83: Recommended) Accolade – Arcade £39.99
Extremely competent *Road Rash* 3DO rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.

Desert Strike
(78) Gremlin – Arcade £34.99
Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.

Doom II
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive – Arcade Game £49.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and brand new monsty-wonsties. Miss it at your peril.

Inferno (CD)
(88: Recommended) Ocean – Space/Sim £44.99
Eagerly awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.

KA-50 Hokum
(85: Recommended) Virgin – Simulation £39.99
Without a doubt the very best helicopter sim money can buy. Something for the propeller heads (yes, we know you're out there)...

NHL Hockey 95 (CD)
(91: Classic) EA – Sports/Arcade £34.99
A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

PGA 486 (CD)
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sports £44.99
Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.

Pinball Dreams CD
(70) 21st Century – Arcade £39.99
Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why is it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.

System Shock
(95: Classic) EA/Origin – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter (at least until *System Shock II* comes out, that is).

Issue 21 – December 1994

Alone in the Dark II CD
(93: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.

Dawn Patrol
(80: Recommended) Empire – Flight Sim £44.99
A gorgeous looking SVGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book, apparently.

Dreamweb
(74) Empire – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shagging scene that has now become infamous.

Ecstatica
(93: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
An utterly brilliant *Alone in the Dark*-alike with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.

FIFA CD
(76) Electronic Arts – Sports £39.99
A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.

Little Big Adventure
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobsmacking.

Magic Carpet
(96: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Bloody excellent shoot 'em up – looks brilliant, totally addictive. A must-have.

Project X
(76) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £19.99
A very competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em up.

Rise Of The Robots
(88: Recommended) Mirage – Beat 'Em Up £44.99
Possibly the best beat 'em up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.

Space Simulator
(75) Microsoft – Simulator £39.99
A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is a little too ambitious for its own good.

Star Crusader
(60) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.

Transport Tycoon
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.

Total Carnage
(74) ICE – Shoot 'Em Up £27.99
Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

Issue 22 – January 1995

Aces Of The Deep
(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra – Naval Sim £39.99
Graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

All New World Of Lemmings
(78) Digital Integration – Puzzle Game £39.99
If you like all the other *Lemmings* games, you'll like this one, too.

Armored Fist (CD)
(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novalogic – Simulation £44.99
Commanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what we mean.

Creature Shock
(78) Virgin – Adventure Game £49.99
An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

Cyberwar
(55) SCI – Arcade Adventure £49.99
It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.

Dark Sun II
(80: Recommended) Mindscape – RPG £44.99
Love it for its brains, not for its looks.

Discworld
(96: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure Game £49.99
Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

Front Page Sports Baseball
(85: Recommended) Sierra – Sport £44.99
It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

Klik 'n' Play
(88: Recommended) Europress – Game Designer for Windows £39.99
Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.

Novastorm
(40) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Repeat ad nauseam: 'Pretty graphics doth not a game make.'

Power Drive
(50) US Gold – Racing Game £39.99
Knock off 30 whole points for no two-player mode. Sod off *Power Drive*.

Quarantine
(80: Recommended) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
An excellent blast and it looks good, too.

Retribution
(45) Gremlin Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.

US Navy Fighters
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
If it had a multi-player facility, we would've given it 100. But it hasn't, so we won't.

Warcraft
(75) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 – February 1995

Alone In The Dark 3
(95: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone In The Dark* trilogy.

Cannon Fodder 2
(74) Virgin Interactive – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Just more of the same, or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more 'fun with a gun'.

Commander Blood
(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure Game £44.99
It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.



(Left) *Theme Park: Sim City* eat your heart out.

Cyberia
(80: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure/Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
A contender for the 'Best-looking game of 1994' award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.

Dragon Lore
(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?

Hammer Of The Gods
(77) US Gold – Strategy £TBA
Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.

Kyrandia 3
(87: Recommended) Virgin – Adventure £44.99
Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!

Lion King
(71) Virgin – Platform Game £29.99
The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable-ish platform game. *PC Zone* good tip number one (in a series of...) – just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.

NASCAR Racing
(84: Recommended) Virgin – Racing Sim £44.99
Papyrus follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round and round in circles.

Noctropolis
(79) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
For a change EA goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.

Ultimate Body Blows
(78) Team 17 – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
An Amiga conversion from Team 17. Don't be put off by that, though – it's actually quite good.

Voyeur
(40) Interplay – Adventure £39.99
Not as pervy as you might think. Yes, there are suspenders and bras in it, but no nudity and no naughtiness (well, not much, at least not enough to satisfy the male staff on *PC Zone*).

Wing Commander 3
(62) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £59.99
Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress – definitely a potentially interesting situation, if ever there was one.

Issue 24 – March 1995

Aladdin
(70) Virgin – Arcade £29.99
He leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin – who else.

Dark Forces
(95: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Action Adventure £54.99
The empire is finally Doom-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.

Doom Clones: Head To Head
(55) Merit – Action Adventure £39.99
We put Merit's *Dr Radiaki* up against *Virtuoso* from Elite and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller
(25) Gametek – Adventure £39.99
It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.

Kick Off 3: European Challenge
(70) Anco – Sport £29.99
The last *Kick Off* was an absolute nightmare. Has Anco finally got it together in Europe?

King's Quest VII
(93: Classic) Sierra – Adventure £44.99
The latest point-and-click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy, cutesy-wutesyness.

Knights Of Xentar
(10) Megatech – Adventure £49.99
A plentiful lack of beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!

Menzoberanzan
(68) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £TBA
Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary role-playing game.

Metaltech: Earthsiege
(87: Recommended) Sierra – Simulation £39.99
Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERC-fest from Sierra. Just one thing though, why have extravagant HERCs that walk when the terrain is perfectly flat?

Realms Of Arkania: Star Trail
(85: Recommended) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £44.99
The sequel to the keenly received *Blade of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...

SuperKarts
(82: Recommended) Virgin – Action £TBA
The most fun you can have with your bum only an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.

TIE Fighter: Defender Of The Empire
(73) LucasArts – Space/Action £19.99
Two new missions and a new ship. What ever will they think of next?

Wings Of Glory
(78) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £TBA
Chocks away as Origin reaches for the skies to do battle with the Hun, dastardly chaps with 'taches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 25 – April 1995

BC Racers
(62) Core Design – Racing Sim £34.99
Chuck Rock meets *Super Mario Kart*. Unfortunately, the clash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Oops.

Big Red Adventure
(70) Core Design – Adventure £39.99
This is the follow up to *Nippon Safes*... arrgh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though, *Big Red Adventure* looks like it could actually be quite good.

BioForge
(95: Classic) Electronic Arts – Action Adventure £44.99
The first 'real' interactive movie? Or is *BioForge* just another game that looks like *Alone In The Dark*?

Descent
(94: Classic) Interplay – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Could this be the game to finally knock *Doom* off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Interplay arrives at last.

Heretic
(78) iD/Raven – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
'*Doom*-in-tights.' Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.

Iron Assault
(57) Virgin – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
A distinctly average 'big robot' game joins the ranks of other distinctly average 'big robot' games on the PC.

Legions
(65) Mindscape – Strategy Wargame £34.99
This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's intense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under *Windows*. Eek!

Lost Eden
(76) Virgin – Adventure £34.99
Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. It's a bit like *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore*.

Issue 26 – May 1995

Atari Action Pack
(50) Activision – VCS Atari Compilation £24.99
This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for *Windows* and all on one CD. So what's it like? Well, it's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!

Cyclones
(78) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
Yet another *Doom* clone – but not a bad one by any means – from the team that brought us both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster*.

Football Glory
(60) Kompart – Sports £TBA
Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*?
A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory*.

Guilty
(58) Psygnosis – Adventure £39.99
Sequel-ola. *Guilty* is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.

Jungle Strike
(79) Gremlin – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike*. But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original. Not bad at all.

NBA Live
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
EA Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game – the best of its type around.

Renegade
(75) SSI – Space Sim £44.99
SSI's *TIE Fighter/Wing Commander* wannabe in glorious SVGA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.

Rise of the Triad
(82: Classic) US Gold and PD Selections – Adventure £39.95
Some love it and some hate it... but of the *Doom*-alikes, this is one of the best.

Super Frog
(40) Team 17 – Platform £19.99
A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.

Tank Commander
(60) Domark – Simulation £39.99
A budget-style tank game at full price. If you've got more money than sense, you'll really love it!

Woodruff and the Schnibble of Azimuth
(75) Sierra – Adventure £39.99
A weird adventure game from Sierra. A wonderfully deceptive adventure with comic-book feel!

X-COM
(94 Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
The first *X-COM* was absolutely brilliant. This sequel is even better still.

Issue 27 – June 1995

Blind Date
(25) Domark – Adventure £39.99
Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's 'interactive-try-to-get-laid-simulator'. What will the softies come up with next?

Full Throttle
(92: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Adventure £49.99
Hooray for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy biker stuff this time. Splendid.

Flight Of The Amazon Queen
(50) Warner Interactive – Adventure £39.99
This game from Warner Interactive is desperately trying to be a LucasArts adventure but failing quite miserably. It's naff.

Hardball 4
(83: Recommended) Accolade/Warner – Arcade/Sports £39.99
Returning May's theme of 'sequels', Warner Interactive brings us the fourth *Hardball*. Surely Warner have to call it quits now?

High Seas Trader
(62) Impressions – Strategy/Simulation £39.99
Affectionately referred to as 'High Street Trader' in the *PC Zone* office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.

Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds
(80: Recommended) Bullfrog – Arcade/Strategy £19.99
A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.

PyroTechnica
(69) Psygnosis – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
Very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.

Psycho Pinball
(78) Codemasters – Arcade £44.99
Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice tables. Some nice music. Sorted.

Slipstream 5000
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Int. – Arcade/Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Three-dimensional-fabby-whizzo racing/shooting/ speedy thing from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.

Star Trek: TNG – "A Final Unity"
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Adventure £49.99
Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the *Star Trek* name so far.

Super Streetfighter II Turbo
(90: Classic) Gametek – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
It would seem that last month's theme was 'games with very long names'. Gametek's *SSF/II Turbo II* is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.

Ticonderoga
(78) Mindscape – Naval/Strategy £44.99
Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid CD bits.

Virtua Chess
(85: Classic) Titus – Strategy £44.99
Snazzy 3D SVGA chess thingy from Titus, France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.

Warriors
(85: Classic) Mindscape – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

Issue 28 – July 1995

1830
(68) US Gold – Board Game £39.99
Set in the early years of American colonisation, a sort of *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk*. Strictly for those of trainspotter persuasion.

Alex Dampier Pro Hockey
(66) Merit Software – Sports Sim £39.95
Ice hockey sim with *FIFA*-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95*.

Alien Breed: Tower Assault
(81) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The sequel to *Alien Breed*, but superior to the PC version of the original. Great graphics and frenzied, addictive shooty action.

Brett Hull Hockey '95
(73) Accolade/Warner – Sports Simulation £39.99
Top-down ice hockey gams, which doesn't match the king of ice hockey sims, *NHL Hockey '95*, but betters *Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95*.

Chaos Control
(40) Philips/Infogrames – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Unbelievably terrible futuristic FMV shoot 'em up that was passable on CD-i, but should never have seen the light of day on PC.

Command & Conquer
(95: Classic) Virgin – Strategy Adventure £44.99
Dune 2 meets *Cannon Fodder* in this brilliant game of soldiers.

Daedalus Encounter
(58) Virgin – Adventure £44.95
Interactive movie game that fails to make the grade – and, for what it's worth, stars Tia Carrere, the babe from *Wayne's World*.

Dominus
(42) US Gold – Strategy Game £39.99
Fantasy battle game with good graphics and comprehensive interface but lacking that vital ingredient – gameplay.

Frontier: First Encounters
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy Simulation £39.99
Disappointing enhanced version of *Elite II*, which is also bugged to jiggery.

Jagged Alliance
(72) Mindscape – Strategy Game £39.99
Risk meets *Syndicate* in this strategy battle jaunt. Not groundbreaking or particularly original but quite good fun all the same.

Loadstar
(35) BMG Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Dreadful FMV shoot 'em up not worth the paper its manual was printed on.

Machiavelli The Prince
(89) MicroProse – Strategy Game £44.99
Colonization-style sim packed with political intrigue, assassinations, plagues, pirates and a unique play by e-mail feature.

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(Right) *Alone in the Dark 3:* More Carnby, cobwebs, murder, mystery and mayhem.

(Far right) *Command & Conquer.* A case of *Cannon Fodder* meets *Dune 2.*





Man Utd: The Double
(71) Krisalis – Sports Sim £29.99
The best *Manchester United* game yet, but it's still not a patch on the excellent *Sensible Soccers* of this world.

Sim Tower
(70) Maxis – Strategy Game £39.99
Basically *Sim City* viewed from the side with the emphasis on tower blocks, but not as addictive – and the presentation is dire.

Virtual Pool
(91: Classic) Interplay – Sports Sim £44.99
Superb gameplay and 3D graphics, complete with a multi-player network option. This is about as close to a real game of pool as you can possibly get.

Issue 29 – August 1995

Civil War
(83: Recommended) Empire – Strategy Game £44.99
The sequel to *Fields Of Glory*, and jolly nice it looks too.

FX Fighters
(93: Classic) Philips/GTE – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
The closest thing to *Virtua Fighter* on the PC, and by far the best beat 'em up you can buy. We love it!

Hi-Octane
(83: Recommended) Bullfrog/Electronic Arts – Racing Game £39.99
Bullfrog surprises everyone by releasing a racing game, and surprises everyone even more by not saying anything about it until it's nearly finished. Hmm.

Micro Machines 2
(92: Classic) Codemasters – Racing Game £44.99
A brilliant, simple and effective racing game with a rather nifty little track designer thrown in for good measure.

Orion Conspiracy
(36) Domark – Adventure Game £39.99
Domark unveils what has to be the worst-scripted computer game ever conceived.

Perfect General 2
(82: Recommended) Mirage Software – Strategy Wargame £44.99
Hex-tastic strategy game for those of you who really like your wargames intense.

Picture Perfect Golf
(30) Empire – Sports Sim £44.99
Pretty bloody naff. But hey, if you want to look at nice, digitised pictures of a golf course, this is well worth the dosh.

Prisoner Of Ice
(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
The second game in Infogrames' *Cthulhu* range, and what a stonker of a point-and-click adventure it is too.

Scottish Open Golf
(60) Core Design – Sports Sim £39.99
Core Design finally releases its 3D virtual golf thing. There are some okay bits and some pretty nob bits. Unfortunately, it's the nob bits that win through.

Silverload
(7) Millennium/Psygnosis – Adventure Game £39.99
Millennium and Psygnosis team up together and produce an adventure which is truly... quite awful.

Striker 95
(62) Time Warner – Sports Sim £34.99
A football game that looks really fab and groovy, but doesn't quite cut it in the gameplay stakes.

Ultimate Doom
(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The original *Doom* re-packaged with an extra episode. Is it another classic or just a colossal rip-off?

Vortex
(80: Recommended) Warner Interactive – Interactive Movie £39.99
It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. Arrrghhh!!!

Issue 30 – September 1995

Across the Rhine
(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Strategy Game £44.99
Well, if you're a propellor head you'll think it's the dog's gonads. If you're a bit of a thicky, you'll still like it, once you work your way through the laborious manual, that is.

Action Soccer
(50) Ubisoft – Football Sim £34.99
It had potential, but ultimately *Action Soccer* seems to have been relegated to the ranks of 'another crap footie game'.

Air Power
(84: Recommended) Mindscape – Flight Sim £44.99
Rowan teams up with Mindscape and chucks in all the best bits from its other flight sims, to make up a sort of fantasy strategy game, which is really pretty groovy.

AIV Networks
(80: Recommended) Infogrames – Business Sim £44.99
A business sim for people who love trains. (Yee gods! What next?)

Dungeon Master 2
(59) Interplay – Role Playing Game £44.99
It came out late and it wasn't worth the wait. Disappointingly out-dated and old-fashioned.

Last Dynasty
(45) Sierra – Space Combat Sim £44.99
A good *Windows*-based adventure game, which is completely ruined by crap combat sections.

Lords Of Midnight
(60) Domark – Adventure £44.99
Another very old game that's been given the sequel treatment – our reviewer said it was the biggest let-down since that leak in his inflatable Claire Rayner.

Sim Town
(81: Recommended) Maxis – Simulation £29.99
Fun and educational in equal measures. But even better, you can make people say rude things when they're pissed off.

Simon The Sorcerer 2
(84: Recommended) Adventure Soft (UK) – Adventure Game £44.99
Simon returns with DMs and long hair. Even though Chris Barrie hasn't done the voice this time, it's still a bloody good talkie adventure.

Space Quest 6
(70) Sierra – Adventure Game £44.99
Trite adventure completely devoid of humour. *Space Quest* fans will love it!

Terminal Velocity
(80: Recommended) US Gold – Shoot 'Em Up Game £44.99
A very good 3D engine, wearing a pair of rather unoriginal and unaddictive 'game-play trousers'.

US Marine Fighters
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £19.99
Absolutely brilliant. The only thing that prevented us giving *US Marine Fighters* 100 per cent was the lack of a network facility.

Issue 31 – October 1995

EF2000
(97: Classic) Ocean/DID – Flight Sim £49.99
Something for everyone. The best balance between simulator and game, ever.

Fade To Black
(94: Classic) Electronic Arts – Arcade Adventure £44.99
A corking follow up to *Flashback*, with lots of spinny-aroundy polygon bits, morphing monsties and big guns.

The Need For Speed
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Racing Game £44.99
There's no need to buy a 3DO now this has made it to the PC! This sits somewhere between *Screamer* and the forthcoming *F1GP2*. We love the splendid crashes!

Apache Longbow
(96: Classic) Digital Integration – Sim £39.99
The best helicopter sim around; although *Comanche* looks better, nothing comes close to matching the mixture of spot on handling, tactics, networking and atmosphere.

Buried In Time
(77) US Gold – Interactive Movie £44.99
The sequel to *The Journeyman Project* is a tad too lengthy; technically it's great but it's lacking the elements of truly enjoyable gameplay.

MechWarrior 2
(88: Recommended) Activision – Board Game £49.99
Mayhem! Go on a stomping frenzy encased in a massive armour-plated robot body. Good, hard-hitting fun with plenty of missions and a good difficulty curve.

Blown Away
(19) Instant Access – Interactive Movie £39.99
A pretty crap game of a pretty crap film.

Cyberbykes
(10) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £24.99
It came, it saw, it sucked. Ideal as a present for someone you don't like.

Lemmings 3D
(71) Psygnosis – Puzzle Game £39.99
We've seen it all before; all that's new is that it's now from a different angle. Yawn.

Player Manager 2
(45) Anco – Sport £34.99
Visually stunted, it's difficult to control the ball. What else? Oh, it's one to avoid.

Championship Manager 2
(92: Classic) Domark – Sport £44.99 (TBC)
Every other football management game is just that – a game – but this one actually becomes 'real life'.

Issue 32 – November 1995

Al Unser Jr Racing
(60) Mindscape – Racing Game £29.99
It has all the features you'd expect from a racing game but ultimately it's fun for only a limited time.

Ascendancy
(93: Classic) Virgin – Strategy £39.99
More than just another space-based strategy game, this has got all the best bits of every god/strategy/warfare game available. A word of warning though, get stuck into this and you can say goodbye to your social life.

Battle Beast
(68) 7th Level – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
A cartoon beat 'em up with excellent animation, cut scenes and special effects – but that's it. Shame, 'cos it looks great, but as for gameplay – forget it.

Burn:Cycle
(85: Recommended) Philips – Interactive Adventure £44.99
One of the best interactive adventures we've seen; good pacing, sharp plot and plenty of variety combine to make it outstanding.

Crime Patrol & Gamegun
(70) American Laser Games/Mirage – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
It won't take you long to exhaust the fun factor of *Crime Patrol*, but the gun is compatible with some other games and as a bundled package it's really not bad value.

Darker
(62) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Mediocre 3D blast 'em up with nice smooth polygons and lots to shoot at, but apart from that not much more.

Fatal Racing
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Interactive – Racing £TBC
Ridge Racer meets *Stunt Car Racer*... as long as you've got a Pentium, of course.

Magic Carpet 2
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
It sent our reviewer into a frenzy! The classic game is now even better, with new monsters and a new graphical style which includes scary night-time bits – totally addictive.

NHL Hockey 96
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
This uses Electronic Art's new 'Virtual Stadium' technology (used to great effect in *FIFA Soccer* to make it look so flash). Definitely one of the nicest-looking sports games we've reviewed for ages.

PGA Tour 96
(94: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
New and improved! Now includes two new Championsip courses, you can play *as* or *against* 14 actual photo-realsitic pros, there's a new picture-in-picture view... need we go on? The best golf game just got better.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure
(70) Activision – Platform £44.99
Conversion of the ancient Atari VCS platform game; nothing particularly special but still fairly addictive.

Primal Rage
(82: Recommended) Time Warner Interactive – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Jurassic Park for psychopaths – yep, dinosaurs a-plenty, good gameplay and graphics. Should appeal to *Mortal Kombat* or *Street Fighter* fans.

Issue 33 – December 1995

Alien Odyssey
(77) Philips – Space Adventure £44.99
A sort of cross between *BioForge* and *Cyberia*, with the odd *Star Wars* reference thrown in; overall a pretty adventure which plods a bit.

Battle Isle 3: Shadow Of The Emperor
(93: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £45.99
The third and possibly final instalment of one of the most highly respected strategy games of all time. Certainly worth checking out if you like your strategy futuristic.

Comanche Vs Werewolf
(88: Recommended) Novalogic/ US Gold – Helicopter Flight Sim £39.99
The sequel takes the original game and chucks in a completely new one as well for good measure. Maybe not the best helicopter flight sim around, but it still has plenty to recommend it.

Crusader
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Blast 'Em Up £49.99
Action, adventure, people getting their heads blown off – bloody excellent.

Destruction Derby
(90: Classic) Sony Interactive – Racing Game £44.99
The PlayStation game where you can smash yourself and others to pieces comes to the PC... Plenty of network options, five different ways to play, superb graphics – need we say more?

FIFA 96
(84) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
If you already own last year's *FIFA* and you quite like it, it's worth buying this one. But if you want a simple and easy to control system look elsewhere.

Mortal Kombat 3
(90) GT Interactive – Beat 'Em Up £44.99
This is the best two-dimensional beat 'em up you'll find anywhere right now. Make damn sure you enjoy it while it lasts.

Navy Strike
(90: Classic) Empire Interactive – Naval Sim £44.99
Actually two games in one: a flight sim and a military command sim. In it you pilot a jet fighter in the future – you'll find that once the atmosphere kicks in you're hooked.

Phantasmagoria
(50) Sierra – Adventure £49.99
Brave effort but the interactive part is a bit ambitious. It looks good but that's about it.

Road Warrior
(61) Gametek – Driving Game £39.99
The sequel to *Quarantine* is unfortunately nothing to write home about, despite the good graphics.

Screamer
(89: Recommended) VIE – Driving Game £29.99
Stunning looking super speedy arcade racer with six different tracks, six different cars (manual or auto) and three different skill levels. Very arcadey indeed.

Worms
(84: Recommended) Ocean – Strategy £34.99
Worms is what you get if you cross *Lemmings* with *Cannon Fodder*. Four people can play at once, there's lots of weapons and features, and the levels are generated afresh each time you play – good fun.

Witchaven
(88: Recommended) US Gold – Arcade/Role-Playing Game £29.99
Packed with lots of spells and potions to play with, the usual network/modem options, triggers and traps, impressive graphical effects – and if you're looking for gore you've found it. Sick, twisted and violent – we like it.

WORDPROCESSOR



Intellectual stimulation and a selection of nutters – we even get the word 'opprobrium' into this month's letters page. Don't say that we never expand your minds just a little bit.

OPPROBRIUM?!?

Hey! Come on. Why reward your poor correspondent (Anton Slaughter issue 31) who only sought advice, with a diatribe of opprobrium? In fact an answer to his question appeared in the same issue. Fitting an S3 864-equipped PCI graphics card to the P90 should meet his requirements. For your own enlightenment, certain graphics cards are not solely confined to speeding up Windows programs as your reviewer wrongly stated.

Harry Persouvert, Wallington, Surrey

For those of you watching in black and white, an opprobrium is actually a dispute of some description. Anyway, onto the point – you seem to have become somewhat confused about the relative merits of graphics cards on the PC. Maybe if you stopped trying to be clever (yes, we all have access to a dictionary – we even know what floccinaucinihilipilification means) and paid attention you would understand what we were trying to convey in the graphics card feature.

Unfortunately, it is actually you that is somewhat mistaken, as a very large number of graphics cards are specifically for the optimisation of Windows. A card such as the S3 would have very little effect over games running under DOS, and the all-important Doom *Benchmark test that we used recently is more than adequate to illustrate this fully.*

At the moment, we still firmly believe that the optimum games machine set-up is a Pentium-equipped machine with fast-burst EDO RAM, a cool motherboard such as a Plato or Triton and a Matrox Millennium graphics card. For more info on the best system to attain, refer to last month's On-Line section where Macca outlined the Ultimate Doom *machine as defined by numerous benchtests around the world.*

COMPUTER WIDOW

There is more to life than computer games – especially when there is a young family involved (but just try telling that to your partner). The computer in our house has been on for nearly 12 hours today – it's now 10pm and I have hardly spent any time at all with my husband, who has spent even less time with his children. I feel that this is extremely unfair and I am very pissed off.

If I'd realised the situation was going to get worse rather than better I wouldn't have married him last July. If he doesn't want a quick divorce, he'd better realise where his priorities lie.

Please print this letter as he reads your magazine every month and maybe he'll get the message before a brick goes through the VDU.

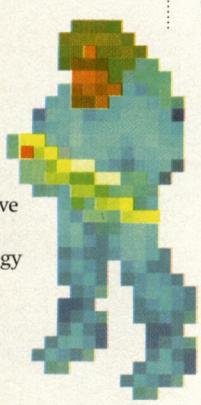
Nicky Jones, Shrewsbury

It's a sad, sad fact that many blokes become completely obsessed with PCs and games. Women can appreciate the finer points of a quality product, but the fellas... well, they just tend to sink themselves in and end up drowning in the intricacies of gameplay. It's odd though, because normally blokes drop anything if they get the chance to get their hands on a good woman. C'mon, let's face it. Games are games are games are games. But girls? Well, they're like, y'know... girls. Aren't they?

After a quick debate in the office, followed by a show of hands we decided that as true, beer-swilling, womanising journo types we are all on your side. The fact that Chris once split up with a girlfriend because he was obsessed with UFO: Enemy Unknown *and Jeremy was screeched at by his girlfriend at three in the morning because he was playing* Championship Manager 2 *instead of doing whatever he and his girlfriend should have been doing is beside the point. In principle, we think that blokes who play computer games all night long are completely sad and we would never, ever do anything like that. Ever. No, really.*

To tell the truth, the fact that the term 'PC Widow' or 'Computer Widow' is in wide circulation is pretty sad. There are a lot of people who do become obsessed by games, and it is now accepted that relationships can be wrecked by blokes' relationships with their PCs. In a recent report commissioned in the US, a large number of women already refer to the family PC as 'the other woman'. Scary, huh? Maybe all you blokes should go out and (re)discover the pleasures of interacting with a real person.

RETURN OF THE BUGS



As a 40-year-old new games addictee with the reflexes of a dead sloth and the mental agility of a lettuce leaf, I've had to choose my games with extreme care. Strategy games are pretty safe, shoot 'em ups are completely out, etc, etc. Thus, I have spent many real, and indeed virtual months, playing the likes of *UFO, Elite* and, of course, *X-Com*.

With my successful, but hard fought thrashing of the *UFO* nasties and final showdown on Mars with the chief alien, I looked forward to many sad hours in front of the PC doing the same to the underwater versions of the same creatures. It was familiar stuff: kill everything, capture commanders and build three alien spacecraft (sorry, submarines), capture a navigator, find the base and wipe it out.

However, after MANY MONTHS it was obvious that the game was flatly refusing to recognise my captures of live Lobster Man Commanders; therefore I couldn't manufacture the final submarine and therefore couldn't get to the final battle.

I was getting excellent scores and receiving loads of funding, but by the end of July 2041 I was told that I wasn't getting anywhere and so the whole thing was over.

After many attempts at changing my strategy I phoned MicroProse, who seemed surprised that I didn't have a patch disk?!? After receiving a copy from them soon after, I continued with my game and continued to experience problems – but of a different nature.

After another call to MicroProse I was eventually told that I should probably start the game again from the beginning. What?! I like the game a lot, but not that much!

What is there to protect the punter from this sort of thing? How is he supposed to know that he actually has to phone up the software house and demand the rest of the game that he has already shelled out loads of money for? First Gametek (and

Write to PC Zone

There are numerous ways to transmit your delightful scrawlings to *PC Zone*. You can either use the traditional method, oft-described as 'snail-mail' by the pretentious technocrats of this world...

WordProcessor
PC Zone
Dennis Publishing
19 Bolsover Street
London
W1P 7HJ

Or you can be really hip, trendy and cyber and do a whacky e-mail thing...

CompuServe: PC ZONE 100142, 2152
CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk



thanks to you I never actually bothered with *First Encounters*) and now MicroProse. Who do I trust? Who do I hand money to? What does the alien city look like? Who the hell cares anyway?

Dave Lampen, Southampton

Our resident UFO-head, Mr Anderson, is STILL completely obsessed with both of MicroProse's incredible strategy games. He was even heard the other night – in a pub ferchrissakes – trying to convert someone to the ways of The Enemy Unknown. *Yes, they are classic games, but unfortunately both have been plagued by bugs since they were launched. Fortunately, the chaps at MicroProse have a very responsible attitude towards bug patches and updates to their software. As a result it's very easy to get hold of the latest fix for virtually any product.*

As far as protection for punters, well unfortunately there is no governing body that oversees the quality control of games that get released. This sort of control is purely down to the discretion of the software house and the producer. After all, these guys want to sell more games – no matter what.

Having said this, I have been in a pub with a bunch of producers (I won't say who, so they don't get lynched) who have openly admitted to releasing product which they know is, and I quote, "bugged to hell" because the gameplay is so damned hard that they know that no one will ever try to get as far as where the bugs are. Irresponsible, yes. Commercially viable? Of course it is. The games industry isn't actively policed in any way. We're subject to BBFC standards for video and ELSPA ratings (a voluntary organisation where companies submit their games for approval) for content – but no one watches quality, except magazines like PC Zone. *If we come across something that's ridiculously bugged we'll let you know. Just like we did with* First Encounters.

PlayStation is better...

After reading your article about PlayStation games on the PC I feel the need to raise a few points.

FACT: PlayStation £299, equivalent PC £1,500. You didn't seem to mention a minimum spec in your feature. Hmm, I wonder why. Could it be that it's at least a P75 or P90 and most of your readers only have 486s?

FICTION: PC versions of PSX games are better because they can be networked. Oh, come on! How many people can network their PC? The PlayStation is getting both a modem and a network 'hub' add-on that will let you network PlayStations at a fraction of the cost.

FICTION: PlayStation needs PC. No it doesn't. Once again you failed to show the truth. PlayStation has more than 250 developers working for it.

FACT: You talk about 'next gen' PC gaming, but how much is it going to cost us and how many developers are going to support it?

This may seem like anti-PC ranting, but I just feel that at the moment the PlayStation is a better machine. How can you claim that the PC is keeping up? There is absolutely no way that a PC could reproduce *Ridge Racer*. It just doesn't have the power.

Wayne Mellors, Rotherham

FACT: The PC dominates a completely different market to the PlayStation. It isn't just a games machine and has never pretended to be. The PC is a tool on which games can be played – not that many of our readers exclusively play games on their systems, they use them for work as well. Also, six months ago the average spec machine owned by PC Zone *readers was a 486DX2/66. We expect this to be at least P75 by early 1996.*

FACT: The PC can be networked using an IPX or other kind of network, it can also dial into networks such as Gamesnet, it can access Wireplay from BT – a phone-in networking system. The PC is the most expandable system around and also the most versatile. Anyone with a modem can play multi-player games with anyone in the world. Okay, the PlayStation has its 'hub' and yes, it will let eight people play linked up – but do you fancy getting eight TVs and PlayStations together in the same room? I know I don't.

FACT: The PlayStation DOES need the PC. Who do you think those 250 developers are? They're mostly PC developers who are expanding their horizons. And what do you think the games are developed on? A PlayStation dev-kit is based on a Pentium PC.

FACT: All major developers are planning to support the new 3D graphics standard and the main backers include Microsoft, EA, Virgin – need we go on?

As far as Ridge Racer *goes, a P75 can do the game almost exactly, the only difference being that the PC runs in 8-bit colour (256 colours) and the PlayStation runs in 16-bit (64k colours).*

We don't want to seem anti-PlayStation – a number of us here own one and we love 'em, but don't write off the PC. It may seem to be lagging behind now, but it will overtake again. The PC always leads the way with new technology, it's just a case of techno leapfrogging, and the PC's turn for the jump will come again soon.

SCORING ISSUE

In issue 30 I read your review of *US Navy Fighter*, which received 92 per cent, which I thought must mean it's pretty bloody good. But in later issues I have seen other games receiving scores of 95, 96 and 97 per cent! Surely these are stupidly high?

One of these days these stupidly high marks are going to bugger you up completely – what happens when the sequel to one of these high scoring games comes out? Does it automatically have to get a higher score? Surely nothing can receive 100 per cent as nothing could be perfect.

Why don't you just drop the score and just write a comment for anything that could be considered worthy of a 'classic' award?

Dara Kelly, Galway, Ireland

The point of the scoring system is to relate to the standard of games available at the moment. You can quite easily judge what should be expected from a game for 1995 and then rate things according to this hypothetical standard. Games such as Command & Conquer *or* EF2000 *receiving scores in the high 90s is purely an indication of how close to the limit these games are. At the moment there is absolutely nothing that* »

can touch them as they are so far ahead in terms of both technology and gameplay.

In a year's time though, the sequels may well be better; however, the overall standard of games is certain to have changed by then, and yet again we will rate the games according to what is considered 'good'. At present, EF2000 *is more than worth 97 per cent. In a year's time we hope that many other developers will have matched this level of quality and as a result we will have to be more harsh on* EF2000's *successor.*

SAD, SAD, SAD BASTARD

Do you like it? Do you? I submit my case for the most complete *Doom* saddo alive – no WADs or toilet pictures or Deathmatch medals for me. Oh no. Just a full size Arachnotron complete with baby blues in me garage!

Am I the only person that does this kind of thing? Has anyone else got a home-made monster in their closet? Perhaps you should run a competition, and let me win.

Can you send the piccy to iD and ask them if I can be commander-in-chief of special effects for the *Doom* movie? Please. Please.

Marcus Lewis, Nuthall (appropriately), Notts

And verily the saddest bastard that ever did walk the earth made himself known unto man and beast alike. And it's written in the tomes of time that his name was Marcus. And he had createth a mighty demon deep within the confines of his garage. And it was large. Fortuitously though, a passing mage did snappeth him with his soul-stealing box and sendeth the results to PC Zone, *where the scribes therein did laugh. They did laugh until they pissed thyselves. And lo!* PC Zone *readers can piss thyselves as well.*

PRICE BUSTERS

First you raise the price of your rag up by 4p and then by a further pound! This is disgraceful considering that the magazine's new look involves a longer letters page than before, which means that we are now paying an extra pound for our own views. We suggest that readers' letters are sent to us with a cheque for £2.95 (£3.95 for the CD version) and we promise to read, edit and discard letters accordingly. Not only do they get their letters read, but they also only pay old prices for the privilege (although they don't get a magazine, admittedly). This would be an excellent alternative and could prove very popular indeed (we think).

The fact that you have now excluded Bits and PCs (which took the letters page count up to four pages) and this means that you now have less reader contribution is beside the point. It doesn't count – because we say so.

Mark McDonald & Ewan Loughlin, East Kilbride, Scotland

Thank you for joining us on the planet Zarg. Who knows, one day these two might actually write in with something vaguely interesting. Still, at least they're consistent.

QUAKE 95?

Does anyone know if *Quake* is going to be a Windows 95 specific product or not?

Brendan O'Sullivan, Dublin

At the moment nothing has been announced at all. iD is currently working very closely with Microsoft on the WinDoom project, so it would be safe to say that the option is being considered. Obviously the whole thing depends on a) When Quake *will actually be finished (current rumours suggest a shareware version by the Spring of 1996) b) The global penetration of Windows 95 as a viable platform for games.*

A conservative guess would be that iD releases two versions of the game – one for DOS and one for Win95. Only time will tell. Nothing is ever certain about an iD project until it's actually finished and ready to be shipped. We'll bring you more news as soon as we have it.

NET SURFER DUDE

I have just joined the 'net' – after you remove it from the bamboo pole and put the fish that you've caught back in the pond, what do you do? Can you help?

David Pye, Southampton

Yep. Go to a pub at around 10:30pm one evening. Aim for one in a built-up area, or preferably in a decent-sized town. Now, go up to the biggest, roughest looking bloke you can find – preferably one with a humming body odour problem and lots of tattoos. Now try and give him a Chinese burn and see what happens.

OCEAN MUSIC

In the November 1995 issue you included a second CD from Ocean Software which had an advertisement for *Hit Squad* on it. The music on this ad wasn't just good, it was absolutely fantastic. I must know what it was! The balance of the universe is at stake.

Sonny Winston, Hampshire

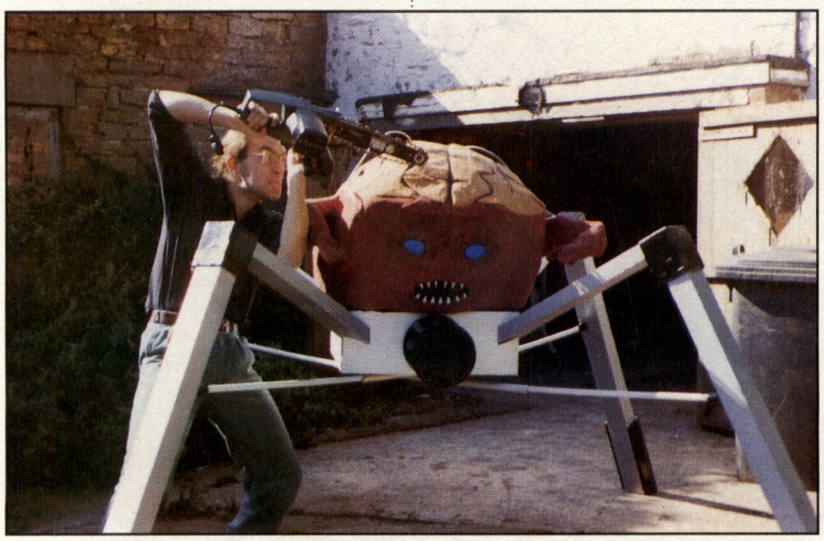
We called the PR bloke at Ocean, a particularly top bloke by the name of Declan, and after much grunting and groaning he finally had to admit that he didn't actually have a clue who it was. "Some library stuff or something," was about the most coherent answer we could get. So there you have it, it's library music. Sorry we couldn't be a little more specific.

WILL WE EVER GET F1GP2?

When is *F1GP2* actually coming out? I've been completely addicted to the first one since it was out on the ST (yes, I had one of these classic machines) and since I have completed the game in Ace mode by winning both the driver and constructors leagues I want a new challenge. I liked the cover feature you did about the game, but when are we actually going to see it?

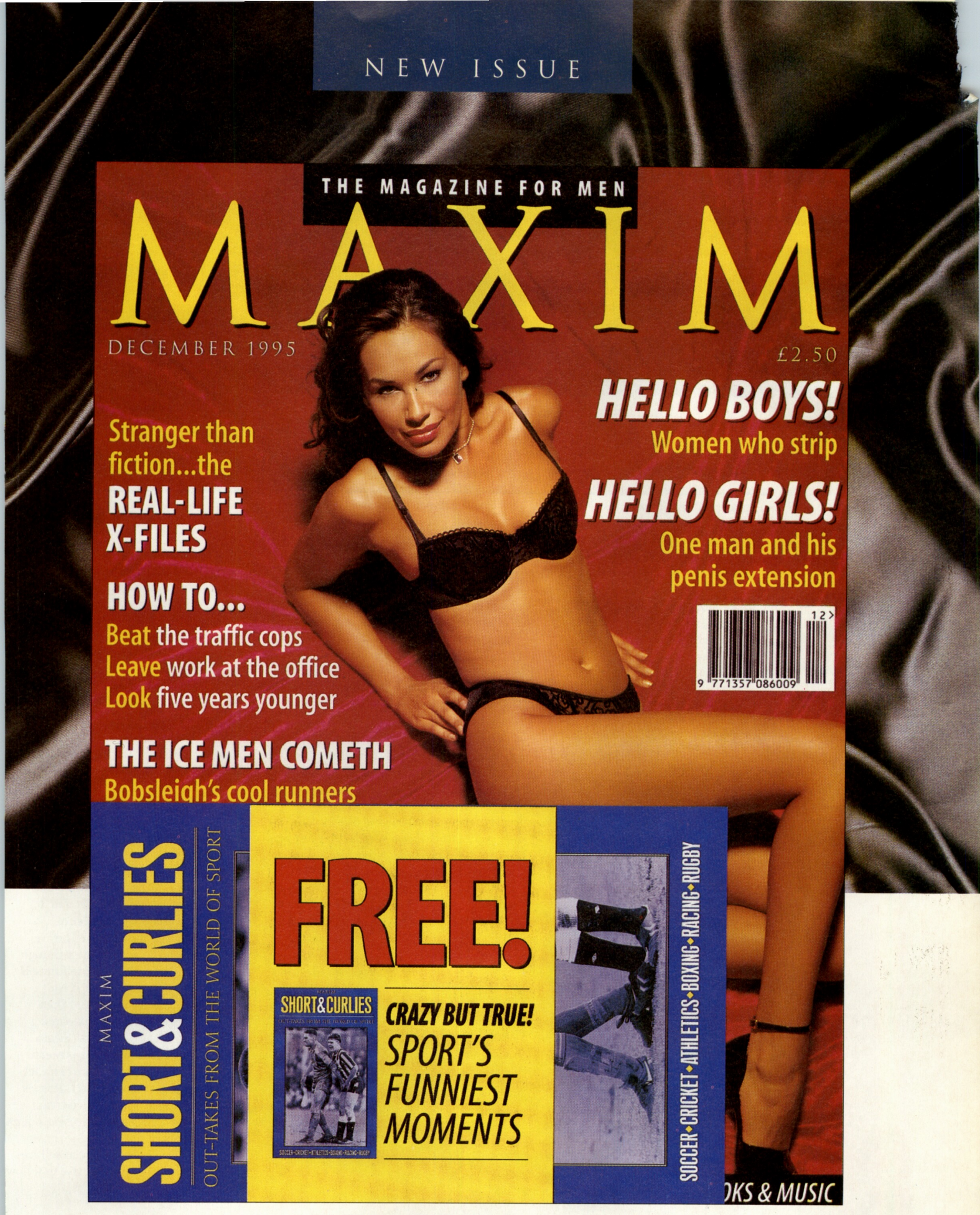
Todd Wilson, Torquay

As far as we know the game is still due sometime before Christmas but, as ever, no one knows exactly when it will be ready. We were originally expecting to see the thing a couple of months ago, so god knows what's happening. Z



(Right) The sign of true *Doom* devotion: Marcus Lewis' DIY, lifesize, blow-up Arachnotron.

NEW ISSUE



On sale 2 November



Mr Cursor

He's afraid of... Magnum adverts

DRIVING GAMES. THERE'S ZILLIONS of the blighters for the PC, and reviewers up and down the country have been showering the latest Pentium-enhanced batch with accolades such as 'total realism at last!', and 'this is how it is!'.

This is how it is, eh? Bollocks. Take *The Need For Speed* for example. Your brief: choose from eight of the most exotic cars on earth, and take a hair-raising spin along the most picturesque stretches of road in the entire universe. What's realistic about that? As far as I'm concerned, an ultra realistic driving game would go more like this...

For starters, it'd be called *Budget – 800 Quid*. And when you started playing the game, you'd soon realise that the 800 quid mentioned in the title also included your third party, fire and theft insurance payment – which'd bring things down to 600 quid in under a jiffy.

So what next? Well, it'd be unrealistic for the program to just hand you a kosher second-hand motor to drive about in – you'd have to decide for yourself. In other words, it's time for a lengthy browse through the in-game *Sim Exchange & Mart, Sim Loot* and *Sim Auto Trader* – basically thousands of three-line fibs and a handful of cheesy out-of-focus photos. For a bit of excitement this section of the game could be given a time limit: you've got to select five 'possibles' in under 15 minutes.

Once you've done that it's time for five bits of FMV, which go something like this... The camera pans around each car in question and your cursor changes into different things, depending on where it's positioned. For instance, if it's over a tyre it might turn into a little 'shoe' – indicating that were you to press the mouse button at that precise moment, you'd give the tyre a wee kick (some people really do do this). Other FMV hotspot cursor-shapes could be a hand (for checking under the wheel arches), a nose (for sniffing round the exhaust pipe), an eye (for staring knowledgeably at the engine, even though it looks completely different from the one in your last car, and you didn't even understand that), and a smiling mouth (which you click on the vendor himself to find yourself engaging in jolly, jovial banter, as if you've been chums for years. He wouldn't sell his best mate a turkey, surely?). But he would, he would. All five of them would, come to that. Or they might, anyway. You never can tell. Still, now it's decision time, followed by a brief barter section (also FMV, with hotspots labelled 'higher' and 'lower').

You plump for the yellow C reg Ford Fiesta. The mileage is slightly high, and let's face it, it's not exactly going to impress the chicks, but at least it'll be fairly reliable; nobody's going to want to nick it, and it's got a year's ticket to boot. Yup, you reckon it'll do – your mind's made up.

Bill (you're on first name terms, don't forget, after using the smiling mouth cursor on his FMV footage) wants 700 notes. As we know, you only have 600. He accepts 590, meaning you get a half tank of petrol, 'free'.

You bid Bill farewell and enter the texture-mapped 3D environment of the game... lots of A and B roads, taking you through some awesomely snooze-worthy English countryside at 50mph. You decide it would be jolly nice to take a trip to Basingstoke *(Some game that is! – Ed.)*, and then home for tea.

Just 45 minutes from Bill's house however, and to make matters worse in the middle of nowhere, the engine begins to severely overheat and a weird scraping noise is coming from somewhere near the rear wheels. (And you're not a member of the RAC.) Now *that's* a realistic driving game!

I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice-cream

Can I just end on the subject of Magnums... the ice-creams? They're still showing the adverts even though it's winter. The girl says, "I tell myself it's only an ice-cream... but it isn't really." (Er, it *is* actually.) And then some poncey-sounding bloke says, "Sometimes I think – I must have a Magnum... right now!" This is meant to imply that Magnum is a unisex ice-cream. But, of course, it isn't. There's no such thing as a unisex ice-cream. Ice-cream is a girly substance – it's 900% more girly than quiche.

If Walls or whoever want to sell ice-cream to chaps, they'd be wise to follow these three guidelines:

A Call it Bloke

B Give it a savoury exterior coating (maybe pork) and an even more savoury filling (rare sirloin steak with mustard perhaps?)

C Have a slow-motion *Baywatch*-style advert, with some cars in it. *(But not yellow Fiestas – Ed.)* **Z**



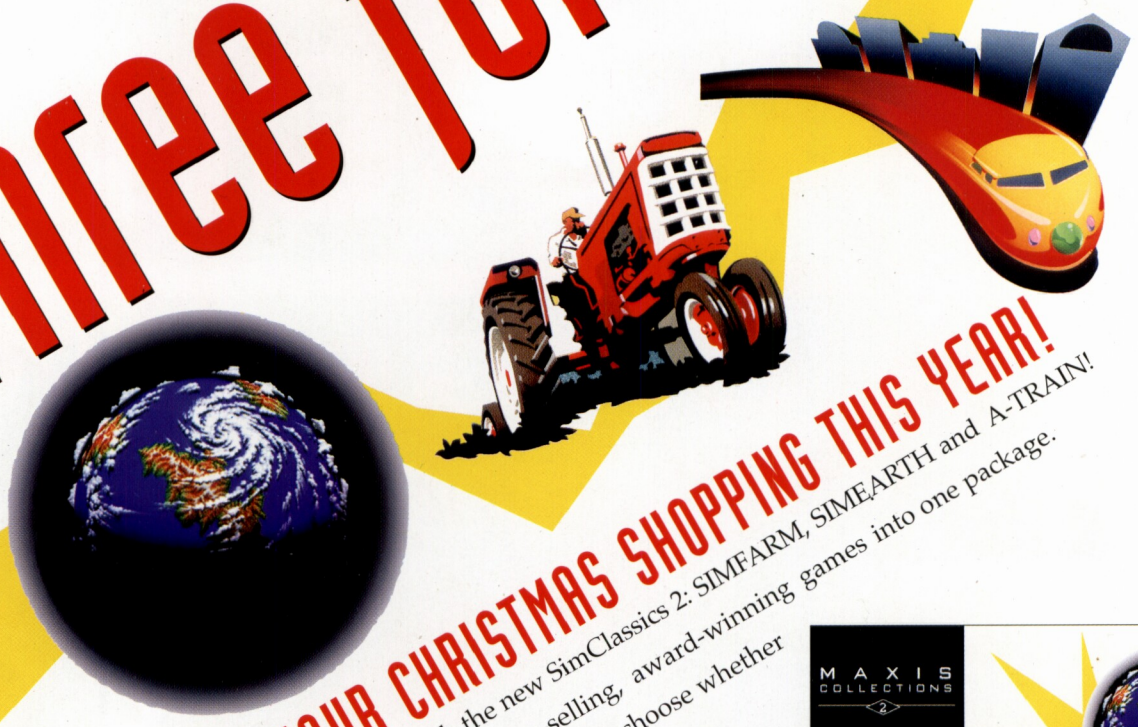
ILLUSTRATION: PAUL EDMUNDS


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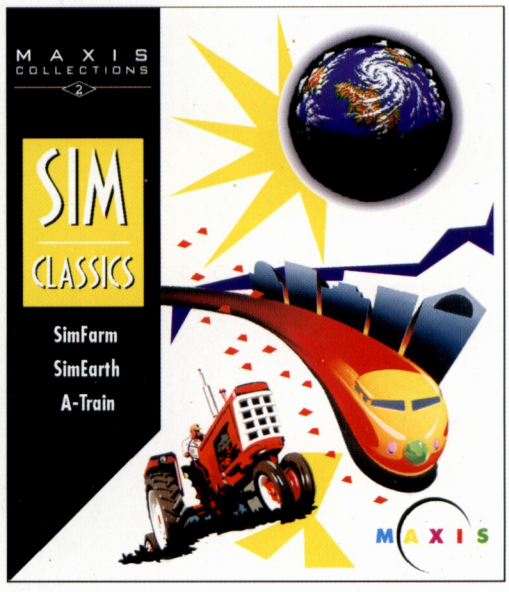
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